TRANSLATION AND RELEVANCE

by

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Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of the
University of London

1989

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Abstract

In this study I argue that the phenomenon commonly referred to as "translation" can be accounted for naturally within the relevance theory of communication developed by Sperber and Wilson: there is no need for a distinct general theory of translation. Most kinds of translation can be analysed as varieties of interpretive use. I distinguish direct from indirect translation, where direct translation corresponds to the idea that translation should convey the same meaning as the original, including stylistic effects, and indirect translation involves looser degrees of faithfulness. I show that direct translation is merely a special case of interpretive use, whereas indirect translation is the general case. More generally, the different kinds of translation, with the various principles and guidelines that have been proposed to account for them, can be explained in terms of the interaction between the principle of relevance and contextual factors, without recourse to typological frameworks. I end by arguing that the communicative success of a translation is not determined by conformity to any stipulations of translation theory, but by the causal interaction between stimulus, context and interpretation rooted in the relevance-orientation of human cognition.

Preface

This study is the outcome of a growing personal concern over the theoretical foundations of translation. As a member of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), I have become closely involved with matters of translation. My linguistic work in Ethiopia under the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of the Addis Ababa University from 1976-1978, 1978-1982, and 1983-1987, and the attempt to deal with a trilingual situation in my own family (English, Finnish, and German) provided much practical experience in translation and its problems.

It was in 1981 that I first tried to formulate some of my concerns about the nature of the principles, rules and methods advocated in translation and especially about their validity; much of the methodology seemed to make sense, some of it seemed questionable - but the worrying thought was that it remained unclear what reality, if any, these reactions reflected and how they could be dealt with objectively. Initially I tried to express my concerns in a textlinguistic framework, but the results were not satisfactory.

During my studies for an MA degree at University College London in 1982/3 I was introduced by Dr. Deirdre Wilson to the relevance theory of communication, which she was developing together with Dr. D. Sperber (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1986a). The cognitive basis of the theory combined with its concern for both comprehensiveness and explicitness appealed to me, and in the years that followed I began to apply relevance theory to a few aspects of translation (Gutt 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988). The results were very encouraging, but it became quite clear that the complex nature of the issues involved required a prolonged period of concentrated research. So in 1987 I had the op-

portunity to return to University College London for doctoral studies under the guidance of Dr. Wilson.

The results of my research surprised me; I had expected that relevance theory would help me to formulate a general theory of translation. However, within a year it became increasingly clear that relevance theory alone is adequate - there seems to be no need for a distinct general translation theory. Accordingly, the main thrust of this study is to explore a range of translation phenomena and show how they can be accounted for in the relevance-theoretic framework.

Chapter one begins with a sketch of the status quo and a critical evaluation. Chapter two introduces basic notions of relevance theory as found in Sperber and Wilson (1986a), and goes on to explore further what is generally involved when utterances are used to interpretively represent other utterances.

Chapters three to seven aim to show how relevance theory applies to various translational phenomena. Chapter three deals with instances of "translation" where the relationship to the original seems incidental rather than crucial to the communication process. Chapter four examines the idea that translations should preserve the meaning of the original. Chapter five argues that much of translation can be viewed adequately as "interlingual interpretive use", noting, however, that on this view the notion of translation would cover a very wide range of phenomena. Chapter six examines the possibility of a much narrower view of translation based on the preservation of the "communicative clues" present in the original. Chapter seven rounds off the discussion by showing that both the wide and the narrow view fall out naturally from the relevance-theoretic framework; it also investigates prerequisites for successful communication by translation.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to my colleagues at the Addis Ababa University who made it possible for my family and me to have the privilege of working and living in a linguistically and culturally rich environment. I especially thank the Silt'i people of Ethiopia who allowed us to live with them and to get first hand experience of both the enrichment and problems caused by cultural and linguistic diversity.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Dr. Deirdre Wilson, my supervisor. It has been a great privilege and joy to work under her guidance and with her encouragement. I thank her for opening my eyes to the wonders of two of the most precious gifts we have: the human mind and the ability to share what is in it with others. My research has brought home to me in a new way the truth that we are "wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

I thank Professor Neil V. Smith for his encouragement and for his comments on earlier drafts of this dissertation. I thank the staff and fellow-students in the Department of Linguistics, University College London, for their input. I thank Dr. Regina Blass, Clinton Robinson, Ronald Sim, and other colleagues for their interest in and feedback on my research.

I want to express my gratitude for the financial help I received from my colleagues in the Eastern Africa Group (SIL) and from the Corporation Academic Scholarship Fund (SIL) in 1987/8, and for the University Postgraduate Studentship which I was awarded by the University of London for 1988/9.

Finally, a very special thank you goes to my wife Eeva and my children Hannele, Hannu and Hedi for supporting a

husband and father whose mind was not always free to give them the attention they needed in these last two years.

Table of contents

Chapter 1

The state of the art - some critical observations

It is becoming commonplace for works on translation theory to acknowledge that there is a vast body of literature on translation, offering a wealth of observations and views on the subject.[1] Almost equally commonly this acknowledgement is followed by some sort of a caveat - expressed with varying degrees of candour - to the effect that the volume of the literature is not necessarily indicative of the degree of understanding reached. Steiner (1975) expressed this in the following words:

> "... despite this rich history, and despite the calibre of those who have written about the art and theory of translation, the number of original, significant ideas in the subject remains very meagre." (p. 238)

Discontent seems to focus in particular on the lack of a comprehensive approach to translation that is both systematic and theoretically sound. For example, back in the sixties Levý observed:

> "Only a part of the literature on the problem of translation moves on the theoretical plane. Until today most studies and book publications, especially on literary translation, have not gone beyond the limits of empirical deliberations or essayistic aphorisms"." (Levý 1969, p. 13; translation my own)

By the end of the seventies, the situation seemed to have changed little, because Kelly (1979) introduces his history of translation theory and practice with the recogni-

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1 For extensive reviews see e.g. Kloepfer 1967, Steiner 1975, Kelly 1979, Bassnett-McGuire 1980, Koller 1983. For bibliographies cf. e.g. Bausch, Klegraf and Wilss 1970/72 (2 volumes), and Lehmann 1982.

tion that "... a comprehensive theory of translation has proved elusive" (p. 1).

And so it has continued into the eighties; in Bassnett-McGuire's (1980) view, "... the systematic study of translation is still in swaddling bands" (p. 1); drawing an analogy to literary studies, Wilss (1982) sees the literature on translation as amounting to a "mass of uncoordinated statements":

> "Slightly modifying the phrase used by Bertolt Brecht to describe literary scholarship as 'a mass of opinions', it could be said that the many views expressed on translation in the past centuries amount to a mass of uncoordinated statements; some very significant contributions were made, but these never coalesced into a coherent, agreed upon, intersubjectively valid theory of translation." (Wilss 1982, p. 11)

More recently still, Bell (1986) has addressed this issue in a paper with the significant title "Why translation theory is in a mess and what we can do about it".

Many different explanations have been proposed for this disappointing situation. One is that translation theorists were preoccupied for too long with debating unfruitful issues, such as whether translation should be literal or free, or whether translation is possible or not. Another suggestion is that the understanding of translation has remained inadequate because it has never been studied in its own right, but merely as a subdomain of some other subject, such as literature or foreign language teaching. Some scholars have suggested the simple, if radical explanation that translation simply is not open to scientific investigation because it is an art or a skill. By contrast, still others have suggested that our scientific understanding of translation is so poor because it really has not been studied in a proper scientific manner.

This last suggestion is perhaps the most important in that it poses a new positive challenge, which has already resulted in new research initiatives on translation.

1 A new initiative

Hofmann (1980) introduces his study of the problem of redundancy in translation as a response to this challenge:

> "The choice of research topic was determined by the recognition that attempts to formulate a comprehensive theory had to fail because of insufficient basic research into the most important invariants and variables of literary translation. ... The most urgent task is ... to describe the nature of those factors operative in the process of translation, to identify them precisely, as far as possible, and to formalize them for application." (p. 1, translation my own)

Such empirical studies pay particular attention to matters of method, and this is indeed seen as one of the distinguishing marks of modern approaches to translation:

> "What distinguishes the modern science of translation from previous considerations of translation theory is its interest in knowledge of methodology and its keener awareness of the problems involved." (Wilss 1982, p. 53)

As Wilss goes on to say, this interest in sound scientific methodology has led to a multidisciplinary view of translation science:

> "Its [=modern science of translation, E-AG] efforts to establish a clear idea of its field of study, ..., have meant that in addition to linguistic points of view, aspects associated with the science of communication, with psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, textlinguistics, speech act theory, philosophy of action (Handlungstheorie), the study of literature, and - last but not least - with teaching, have taken on relevance for the science of translation." (1982, p. 53)

Schulte (1987) observes that although the interdisciplinary nature of translation had been noted for some time, it "... has received very little attention during the last decade" (p. 2). Yet this aspect is seen as very important:

> "Translators do not engage in the mere transplantation of words; ... their interpretive acts deal with the exploration of situations that are constituted by an intense interaction of linguistic, psychological, anthropological, and cultural phenomena." (1987, p. 2)

And so it seems that we have entered a new era of empirical, multidisciplinary research on translation:

> "We believe strongly that the time is ripe - indeed, long overdue - for a wholehearted commitment by linguists (broadly defined), other human scientists, practicing translators, language teachers and translator-trainers in a multidisciplinary approach to the description and explanation of translation; as both process and product." (Bell 1986, p. 7)

2 Reservations

2.1 The risk of (multidisciplinary) disintegration

Yet, positive as this sounds, reservations have increasingly been expressed, not only by those who believe that translation falls outside the domain of scientific investigation, but by those advocating such investigation. Thus Wilss concedes that "... there are serious difficulties involved in designing a paradigm for the science of translation which would withstand the test of the theory of science and which would be capable of furnishing verifiable results" (1982, p. 65). Crucially, he sees the root of the problem as lying in the multidisciplinary expansion itself:

> "The ensuing problems of objectification can be explained primarily by pointing out that translation

> cannot be termed a purely 'linguistic operation' ..., but rather must be thought of as a psycho-linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmalinguistic process ... which lends itself to an exhaustive scientific depiction only with the greatest difficulty." (Wilss 1982, p. 65)

Thus one problem seems to be that the multidisciplinary approach to translation brings with it a serious threat to the very aim for which it has been demanded: that of developing a science of translation.

De Waard and Nida (1986) express the problem diplomatically as follows:

> "Translation is also a science in the broad sense of the term, for it is an activity which may be systematically described and related meaningfully to various disciplines. In the strict sense of the word, however, translating is not a science but a technology, for it is built upon a number of scientific disciplines, including psychology, linguistics, communication theory, anthropology, and semiotics." (p. 185)

Thus one of the main problems with the scientific investigation of translation seems to lie in the fact that not only linguistic factors, but many other factors need to be taken into account. Since these factors belong to a variety of different domains of life, there is a question whether a comprehensive account of translation in the form of a coherent and homogeneous theory can ever be achieved. In other words, one of the main obstacles to a comprehensive scientific account of translation seems to lie in the complexity and heterogeneity of the factors that have a bearing on translation.

2.2 The problem of determining the domain of the theory

A second major problem arises when we raise the question of what a general science of translation is to be about, that is, what its domain should be. The obvious answer,

of course, is that it should be about translation - but the problem is that it is not clear a priori what translation itself is. Krings (1986) comments that the notion of translation is used to refer to a variety of rather different phenomena such as "intralingual vs. interlingual translation, translation of isolated words or sentences (e.g. in foreign language teaching) vs. translation of whole authentic texts, translation vs. interpretation (consecutive vs. simultaneous interpretation), translation as process vs. translation as product of that process, translation from one language to another vs. translation from a natural language into another system of signs (e.g. Morse code), translation vs. transliteration (translation into another writing system, for example from Cyrillic to Roman script), human vs. machine translation, translating from (the foreign language) vs. translating into (the foreign language), translation vs. free paraphrase or imitation" (p. 5; translation my own).[2]

There have been three major lines of approach to this issue: one has relied on shared intuitions about the domain of the theory without any attempt at defining it in any systematic way. Historically this has perhaps been the line taken most often. The second approach is for the translation theorist to delimit the domain by definition. Thus, having listed a number of definitions of translation, Krings (1986) points out that one of their functions is "... to establish a consensus as to what translation is taken to be, or more importantly what it is taken not to be" (p. 4, translation my own). The third approach is a culture-oriented one: translation will be what a culture takes it to be.

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2 A more comprehensive listing is given by Wilss 1982, pp. 27f. Cf. also the overview given in Snell and Crampton 1983.

The obvious weakness of the first approach is that it does not lay a very good foundation for an explicit science. The second approach has been criticized as being potentially normative: by defining what translation is, it implicitly sets a norm, in that it excludes from consideration all phenomena that do not meet the criteria of the definition. Thus van den Broeck (1980) states:

> "Much of the theorizing about translation, in our time as well as in the past, has however largely neglected this relativistic point of view. Most of the definitions given are prescriptive rather than descriptive; they serve as norms for translation practice - or rather, for a certain kind of practice - and fail to account for the description of existing translations, in as far as they pay no regard to norms operative in areas and times other than those for which they were designed." (p. 83)

One reaction to this has been the formation of the "Descriptive Translation Studies" approach to translation, which claims to have achieved, among other things, "... a considerable widening of the horizon, since any and all phenomena relating to translation, in the broadest sense, become objects of study" (Hermans 1985, p. 7).[3] The way this is achieved, according to the proponents of this view, is by taking the third, culture-oriented approach. This approach starts with a corpus of target language texts suspected to be translations, and tries to discover "... the overall CONCEPT OF TRANSLATION underlying the corpus" (Toury 1985, p. 20). A crucial step in this process is that of setting up the corpus, because it will determine the domain of the investigation, and hence also its results. Toury himself raises this question:

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3 For an introduction to "descriptive translation studies" cf. e.g. Bassnett-McGuire 1980, Hermans 1985 and Toury 1985.

> "How ... are translations to be distinguished from non-translations within the target culture, if such a distinction is to serve as a basis for the establishment of corpora, appropriate for study within DTS [=Descriptive Translation Studies, E-AG]?" (1985, p. 19)

He replies:

> "The answer is that, if one does not wish to make too many assumptions which may prove difficult or impossible to maintain in the face of the empirical data, one really has no foolproof criterion for making such a distinction *a priori*. The only feasible path to take seems to be to proceed from the assumption that, for the purpose of a descriptive study, a 'translation' will be taken to be any target-language utterance which is presented or regarded as such within the target culture, on whatever grounds ... ." (1985, pp. 19f)

What are the grounds on which a target-language utterance may be regarded as a translation? Toury suggests a number of possibilities, "... ranging from its explicit presentation as one, through the identification in it of textual-linguistic features which, in the culture in question, are habitually associated with translations, to the prior knowledge of the existence of a certain text in another language/culture, which is tentatively taken as a translational source for a certain target-language text." (1985, pp. 22f)

This last criterion, that is, the existence of a text in another language from which the target language text could have been translated, is emphasised by Toury in that it allows translation studies even in "... cultures which do not at all distinguish - on the product level, that is (since *the translation procedure should be regarded as universally acknowledged in situations where translating is indeed performed*) - between original compositions in the target language and translations into it." (1985, p. 23, emphasis my own)

This explanation seems rather surprising in view of the claim that "Descriptive Translation Studies" is concerned with discovering "the nature of the prevailing concept of translation" in the target culture: it would seem that such a discovery would presuppose that there is a concept of translation - yet Toury explicitly states that this is not a necessary condition: "Descriptive Translation Studies" can be carried out even if the people do not distinguish translations from other target-language texts.

Toury's answer is, of course, to be sought in the italicised statement. However, this statement reveals that Toury's approach is, in fact, not culture-determined but does make a priori assumptions about translation, or rather about 'translating': it is assumed that people of any culture universally realise that they translate when they translate. Thus Toury does after all, in the last resort, rely on a universal concept of 'translating' as a process, if not of 'translation' as a product.

Indeed, it is difficult to see how "Descriptive Translation Studies" could otherwise be applied to any language other than English: only in English are texts regarded as 'translations', and in the absence of any further *intercultural* assumptions there is no a priori reason for relating an English 'translation' to a German 'Übersetzung' or to an Amharic 'tIrgum'.[4] In other words, the study of translations as an intercultural discipline cannot be carried out on purely culture-specific assumptions; it must include intercultural assumptions as well.

Thus the culture-specific approach does not really resolve the problem of defining the theoretical domain:

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4 Amharic is an Ethio-Semitic language, and is used as the official language in Ethiopia.

either it leads to the abolition of the intercultural study of translation or it does in fact rely on non-culture-specific criteria for determining its domain.

2.3 The problem of evaluation and decision-making

Another major problem area that is regarded as making the scientific study of translation difficult is that of evaluation and decision-making. Wilss (1982) comments on this as follows:

> "Owing to its structure, it is more difficult for the science of translation than for the more strongly system-oriented linguistic disciplines to acquire an epistemological foundation and arrive at a description of translation which adequately deals with the problems involved. *This is because the translation process involves a decision-making process in a great variety of texts that are of practical importance to translation.*" (p. 13; emphasis my own)

The need for decision-making arises from the fact that the target language rarely allows the translator to preserve exactly what the original conveyed. Levý (1967) illustrates this by considering how the title of Brecht's play "Der gute Mensch von Sezuan" could be translated into English. He observes that in English "... there is no single word equivalent in meaning and stylistic value to the German 'Mensch'" (p. 1171): English *person* would be equivalent in meaning, but belongs to a different stylistic level. If the translator tried to maintain the same level of style, he would be faced by the fact that in English the range of meaning of *Mensch*, "denoting the class of beings called 'homo sapiens'", "... is covered by two words: 'man' and 'woman'" (1967, p. 1171). So, since none of the options considered captures *all* that the original seemed to express, the solution is not self-

evident but requires a non-trivial decision on the translator's part.

In one of his most recent books Wilss notes that despite its importance this aspect of translation seems to have been largely neglected:

> "In view of the complexity of decision-making in translation one would expect the science of translation to have launched an intensive discussion of the nature of the decision-making processes in translation, but no such discussion of any degree worth mentioning has taken place. In the vast technical literature on the science of translation, the notion 'decision-making process' occurs only three times in the title of a publication ..." (Wilss 1988, p. 93)[5]

With regard to evaluation, too, he notes: "The teaching of translation methods in most cases points out only *that* one has to evaluate and weigh, but not *how* to do it." (Wilss 1988, p. 97)

2.3.1 Non-theoretical approaches

One possible reason for this neglect may lie in the fact that while recognizing its importance in practice, some have denied that this aspect of translating should or could be covered from a theoretical or scientific point of view.

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5 Levý (1967) is one of these three; it sketches the possibility of combining a game-theoretic approach with pragmatic considerations ("minimax strategy"). In addition to its reliance on a semiotic system, this sketch seems deficient in that it does not explain how readers can recover what the translator intended to convey. The other two titles are Kußmaul (1986) and Reiss (1981). Wilss points out that neither of them actually addresses the problem of decision-making itself. - Where decision-making is referred or alluded to in other works on translation, one finds that the science of translation is still in its infancy "... if one wants to know, how deci-

For example, Steiner argues that the "precisions" to be achieved in translation "... are of an intense but unsystematic kind", and he concludes from this that the study of translation as a whole is not really a science: "What we are dealing with is not a science, but an exact art" (1975, p. 295).

Newmark is also sceptical about an objective approach to evaluation in translation:

> "Translation shares with the arts and other crafts the feature that its standards of excellence can be determined only through the informed discussion of experts or exceptionally intelligent laymen; ... After mistakes have been 'proved' by reference to encyclopaedias and dictionaries, experts have to rely on their intuition and taste in preferring one of two or three good translations of a sentence or paragraph. Their final choice is as subjective as the translator's choice of words, but they must be ready to give reasons for their choice." (Newmark 1988, p.18)

And like Steiner, Newmark is sceptical about the scientific treatment of translation as a whole:

> "In fact translation theory is neither a theory nor a science, but the body of knowledge that we have and have still to have about the process of translating: ..." (Newmark 1988, p. 19).

This is, of course, a possible position to take - but obviously not helpful to scientific penetration of the subject.

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sions in the process of translation come about and what causes they have" (Wilss 1988, p. 94).

2.3.2 (Functional) Equivalence

However, at least with regard to translations as products, many theorists have attempted to deal with evaluation. Traditionally, this was often done in terms of such notions as "faithfulness" and "fidelity", but currently the dominant evaluative concept in translation is that of "equivalence": the quality of a translated text is assessed in terms of its equivalence to the original text. While this general maxim is widely agreed upon, the problem is that in itself it says hardly anything:

> "The concept of equivalence postulates a *relationship* between source-language text (...) and target-language text (...). The concept of equivalence does not yet say anything about the *nature of the relationship*: this must be defined in addition. The mere demand that a translation be equivalent to a certain original is void of content." (Koller 1983, p. 186; italics as in original)

In other words, the notion of 'equivalence' is meaningful only with regard to a conceptual framework that spells out what aspects of the texts are to be compared and under what conditions equality is thought to pertain.

This has turned out to be a major problem because different scholars have proposed different frames of reference: Kade (1968a) restricts his approach to the content level, Koller (1972) refers to "textual effect", Nida and Taber (1969) to audience response, and Koller (1983) proposes five frames of reference (denotation, connotation, textual norms, pragmatics, and form), to name but a few. The most widely accepted frame of reference for translation equivalence now is probably that of "function", which amounts to the claim that a translated text (or element of a text) is equivalent to

its source language counterpart if it fulfils the same function (Levý 1969, House 1981, de Waard and Nida 1986). As Svejcer has put it: "Equivalence is one of the central issues in the theory of translation and yet one on which linguists seem to have agreed to disagree" (Svejcer 1981, p. 321).

2.3.2.1 The problem of over-specification

One of the sources of disagreement is that texts are not only very complex structures in themselves but are also complex with regard to the uses to which they are put and the effects which they can have in a given situation. This means that translation and original can be compared with regard to a very large number of factors, any of which can be significant for some detail in the text, and hence needs to be taken into consideration when establishing equivalence.

Wilss gives an illustration of how very specific expectations of the recipients can affect judgments of equivalence:

> "The importance of the TL [=target language] recipient comes out quite clearly in a translation example by Neubert concerning the German translation of a passage in John Braine's novel "Room at the Top" (1968, 32f):
>
> (12) I came to Warley on a wet September morning with the sky the grey of Guiseley sandstone. I was alone in the compartment ...
>
> (13) Es war an einem regnerischen Septembermorgen mit einem Himmel wie aus grauem Sandstein/Guiseley-Sandstein, als ich in Warley ankam. Im Zug hatte ich das Abteil für mich gehabt ...
>
> Neubert argues that the decision on the rendering of 'Guiseley sandstone' by 'Sandstein' or 'Guiseley-Sandstein' is determined by the interest of the recipient. If this interest is exclusively focussed on literary aspects of the original, the translator can confine himself to the reproduction

> of 'Guiseley sandstone' by 'Sandstein', without offending against important TE [= translation equivalence] postulates and without shortchanging the SLT [= source language text]. If, on the other hand, the translator must reckon with additional interests of the reader in area studies, he must react accordingly, because in a case like this only a translation containing an explicit reference 'Guiseley sandstone' would meet TE expectations and thus could be regarded as adequate." (Wilss 1982, p. 145)

In the light of such problems, Wilss concludes:

> "... TE [translation equivalence] cannot possibly be integrated in a general translation theory (...), but must be looked upon as part of specific translation theories which are at best text-type-related or, even more restrictedly, single-text-oriented." (1982, p. 135)

It is surprising that Wilss does not discuss the further implications of such a view for the whole enterprise of constructing a theory of translation. One of the main points of theory-construction is that it should allow us to account for complex phenomena in terms of simpler ones: that is, one of its main motivations is to make *generalisations* about phenomena. But if it turns out that each individual phenomenon - which here is not only each text, but potentially each instance of translating it for a particular audience - may require its own theory of equivalence, then this means that these phenomena cannot be accounted for in terms of generalisations at all, and that they actually fall outside the scope of theory. Thus recognition of the potential need for single-text based "theories" of translation equivalence entails a possible reductio ad absurdum of the notion of "theory" itself.

2.3.2.2 The invalidity of "equivalence" as an evaluative standard

A further problem area is the evaluative use of the notion of equivalence. To see this, let us take a closer look at House's (1981) treatment of equivalence in translation, which offers one of the more detailed models of functional equivalence.

House starts from the assumption that "... in order to make qualitative statements about a translation text (TT), TT must be compared with the source text's (ST's) *textual profile* which determines a norm against which the appropriateness of TT is judged ..." (pp. 51f; italics as in original). Such "textual profiles" are detailed analyses that allow the classification of texts on the basis of their linguistic characteristics along eight different dimensions; three of these are "dimensions of language users": geographical origin, social class, time; the other five are "dimensions of language use": medium, participation, social role relationship, social attitude, and province.[6] In terms of this model, the evaluation seems to be straightforward enough: the profile of the original text provides the norm against which the profile of the translated text is to be compared.

However, in the course of the presentation, it becomes clear that the matter is much less straightforward, because for an evaluation it is not sufficient to note similarities and differences; one also has to place a value on them. When the profiles of two translations dif-

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6 The notion of 'province' is explained as follows: "... *Province* reflects occupational or professional activity. Examples of *Province* would be 'the language of advertising', 'the language of public worship', 'the language of science', etc.." (House 1981, p. 40)

fer from that of the original along the same dimension, the problem is not so difficult:

> "In that two TTs [=translated texts] may show mismatches on the same parameter(s), their relative adequacy is clearly a function of the relative degree of mismatch on the particular parameter(s)." (House 1981, p. 208)

Thus their relative adequacy can be evaluated by quantification: the text whose profile shows fewer mismatches with the profile of the original is the more adequate one.

But what if two translations differ from the original in more subtle ways? House discusses a theoretical example where one translation has very few "... dimensional mismatches, but contains many overtly erroneous errors" and the other "... has several dimensional mismatches but no overtly erroneous errors" (1981, p. 208). She suggests:

> "It seems to us that a comparative evaluation of these two TTs can only be arrived at from a consideration of the individual texts and the individual translations themselves. We may, however, hypothesize (...) that the subgroup of overtly erroneous errors which we called 'mismatches' of the denotative meaning' will be marked as a more serious detraction from the quality of a TT than dimensional mismatches whenever the text has a strongly marked ideational functional component, e.g., mismatches of the denotative meaning of items in a science text are likely to be rated higher than a mismatch on *Social Attitude.*" (1981, pp. 208f)

Then she points out again:

> "A detailed hierarchy of errors for any individual case can, however, only be given for a particular comparison of two or more texts depending in any particular case on the objective of the evaluation, ..." (1981, p. 209)

This position is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it seems to show that House's model for quality

assessment provides a basis only for systematic *comparison* - but *not* for *value judgments*: those will follow from an assumed "detailed hierarchy of errors" which is specific for the set of texts to be compared and will depend "on the objective of the evaluation". Thus for the actual evaluation no general framework is provided but we are directed towards text-specific "hierarchies".

Secondly, it raises the suspicion that apart from House's particular model the notion of 'equivalence' itself may not be truly evaluative in nature but merely comparative, in that it allows only statements about "sameness" and "difference". Such statements are, of course, useful but do not in and of themselves constitute value judgments: they can be turned into value judgments - but *only on further assumptions*, for example that the more "equivalent" a translation is, the better it is. Such a statement clearly falls outside of a theory of equivalence itself: it relates the theory of equivalence to a theory of values.

2.3.2.3 Hierarchical solutions

There is a third noteworthy aspect of House's position as illustrated in the above quotation. It reveals a very general trend in current translation theory: where problems of evaluation arise, the solution is assumed to lie in some hierarchical structure that determines the priorities between different categories and parameters.

This idea was already important in Levý's (1969) functional approach to translation. Levý saw it as crucial for a reliable translation that in the decision making process "... the relative importance of the values in a piece of literature are recognized" (1969, p. 103; translation my own), and he suggested the following ap-

proach for determining the importance of a given "value" or "function" in the text:[7]

> "In general, one can say that with words that have several expressive functions, the function in the semantic complex of the higher order is the more important one, be it the context (the sentence, the paragraph etc.), be it the character of a person, the fable or the philosophical objective of a work. The highest complex of expression, sometimes referred to as the idea of the work, its world view, dominates the solution of problems in some lower unit, e.g. when choosing the stylistic level, and this in turn determines the solution of problems of detail." (1969, pp. 104f; translation my own)

Levý himself gives only a very brief sketch of the sort of hierarchy of functions envisaged. As we shall see in chapter five (cf. section 2), the glimpse he gives of that hierarchy raises a number of questions, and it seems fairly clear that such a hierarchy would have to be very complex in order to be adequate. The following statement by Hofmann - almost twenty years later - gives a clearer idea of the degree of complexity, especially when one considers that Hofmann, too, is addressing only a subset of translation problems, those concerned with redundancy of information in drama; for Hofmann it is part of the "highest obligation" for the translator of drama to develop "... a scheme for ranking those elements that contribute to the aesthetic effect perceived" (1980, p. 23; translation my own), and this process should be systematic:

> "In doing so it is important for the translator to subject his intuitive creativity, ..., to a *systematic* method of analysis." (Hofmann 1980, p. 23; translation my own)

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7 Levý appears to use here the notion of 'value' ["Wert"] interchangeably with the notion 'function' ["Funktion"].

Hofmann spells out:

> "To each unit of meaning on the level of sentence and sub-scene a grid should be applied which will determine, for a selection of the relevant expressive means, the position of the effective elements
> 1. descriptive-quantitatively and
> 2. by qualitative evaluation with regard to the content and meaning to be transferred;
> in this way the grid will offer strategies for resolving the unavoidable conflict of the expressive means that compete with one another and with the invariant elements/variables of content/semantics, pragmatics (effectiveness on stage)" (Hofmann 1980, p. 23; translation my own).

The list of aspects that need consideration in this is long, including, for example, "rhythm, metre, verse, rhyme, nominal-verbal style, choice of words, proverbs, puns, metaphors, illustrations, euphony and cacophony, grammatico-rhetorical figures, syntactic means, ... , intonation, tempo, pauses" and a few others (Hofmann 1980, p. 23; translation my own).

Developing a translation theory along these lines is a truly formidable task: it involves not only developing a framework comprehensive and detailed enough to capture all these different aspects, but also relating them in terms of hierarchical structures that will rank them all according to their relative importance in a systematic way.

However, there is another, more important concern than the feasibility of constructing such complex hierarchies, and that is the question of what reality lies behind them. In other words, what is it that makes translation equivalence with regard to property X rank higher in some sense than equivalence with regard to property Y?

This question is rarely addressed explicitly. Levý talks in terms of three oppositions - "general-individual", "whole-part", and "content-form" -, and suggests that the

translator should emphasise the general, the whole and the content.

He gives no further explanation as to why the first member of each pair should normally be considered predominant, and makes clear that even these rankings are not absolute - the second member of each pair is not to be suppressed, "... especially not in cases where it turns into its antithesis: form must be preserved where it is the carrier of the semantic (stylistic, expressive) value, uniqueness where it is a component part of a more general value, that is, of the nationally and historically specific" (Levý 1969, p. 108; translation my own). Thus not only does the basis of his ranking scheme remain unclear, but it also seems to be open to the possibility of a dialectical reversal of rankings.[8]

Hofmann appeals to pragmatics, which "... embraces the purpose and goal of the translation" (1980, p. 27; translation my own) declaring it to be the "invariant" dimension.

One of the most developed and explicit attempts to set up an evaluative framework for translation that goes beyond statements about equivalence is the action-theoretic approach developed by Reiss and Vermeer (1984). Having argued that equivalence is not the most basic concept in translation - there is no aspect of the original that will necessarily have to be preserved in translation - they suggest that equivalence is, in fact, only a special

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8 Levý himself applies the terms 'dialectics' to these oppositions: "Closely linked to the dialectics of the individual and the general is the dialectics of the *whole* and the *part*." (1969, p. 102) On p. 108, he also speaks of the "dialectics of *content* and *form*" (translations my own; italics as in original).

case of a more general notion: that of adequacy. Adequacy in turn is always linked to the notion of purpose ("skopos") - and it is this notion that dominates translation:

> "As the highest rule of a theory of translation we propose the 'rule of skopos': An action is determined by its purpose (is a function of its purpose)." (1984, p. 101; translation my own)

Thus it seems that the notion of purpose provides the evaluative dimension for translation. However, a closer look shows that this is not actually the case, because Reiss and Vermeer postulate that there is a set of purposes, and furthermore that this set has a hierarchical structure: "Purposes are hierarchically ordered" (1984, p. 101). In other words, what looked like a final answer to the problem of evaluation turns out to be only another intermediate step, raising the question of what that further dimension or principle is that determines the hierarchical ordering of purposes.

Thus, instead of solving the problem of evaluation, Reiss and Vermeer only add another layer of theory to an already overwhelmingly complex framework.

3 A problem of scientific method (research programme)

In summary, it seems that the "modern" science of translation has yet to solve some rather fundamental problems. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that these problems are not just particular difficulties that will be overcome by further research. It rather seems that these problems are not unrelated, and that they are at least partially conditioned by two basic methodological considerations: one is the reliance on a descriptive-classificatory approach to science, and the other is the

choice of the domain.[9] In this section I want to show how these two issues relate to the problems surveyed above.

Starting with the descriptive-classificatory approach, its basic aim is to provide an orderly or systematic description of the phenomena in its domain. It starts from the observation that no phenomenon is totally different from every other phenomenon, but that sets of phenomena seem to be similar in some respects. These similarities can be exploited for purposes of description: they allow the theorist to describe the phenomena in sets or classes rather than individually - which lends generalising power to the theory. To the extent that phenomena with similar properties tend to behave in similar ways, this approach is also vested with a certain amount of predictive or explanatory power, though this is not usually seen as its first interest.

This explains why translation theories have tended to set up classification schemes at every level, from linguistic features via text typologies to sets of purposes: this approach relies on classification schemes because they are the only basic theoretical tools it has. All the generalisations are made in terms of classes, hence in order to be covered by the theory, each phenomenon in the domain must be assigned to a class. This in turn means that the classificatory framework must be comprehensive

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9 The criticism here of current approaches to translation in many ways parallels that raised by Chomsky against the "structuralist" or "taxonomic" approach to linguistics (cf. e.g. Chomsky 1964). However, the differences in the domains - linguistic competence versus communicative competence - mean that different arguments are required. I prefer the term "descriptive-classificatory" to either "structuralist" or "taxonomic" partly because of this difference in domain, but partly also because the latter terms seem to have polemical overtones in certain circles.

enough to include all phenomena in its domain, and this explains why the number of classes and classification schemes in translation theory have kept increasing as new sets of phenomena were found to be relevant to translating: for these phenomena to fall under some generalisation they must first be assigned to classes - which requires the setting up of additional appropriate classification schemes.

The resulting proliferation of classificatory frameworks is further aggravated by the choice of domain, which is seen as consisting either of translated texts viewed in direct relation to the original texts (the product perspective) or of the processes and operations that lead from the original to the translated text (process perspective).

Viewed from the product perspective, translation theory faces the problem of a virtually infinite task: since there is no upper limit to the number of different texts a language can produce, and therefore to the number of translations that can exist in a language, corpus-based description of translation will never be able to exhaust its domain.[10]

From the process perspective there seem to be two alternatives, depending on whether the aim is to deal explicitly with the evaluative aspect of the translation

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10 This is on the understanding that such product-oriented translation theories are essentially descriptive statements about a corpus of translated texts (or original-translation pairs of texts), just as structural grammars are typically conceived as "descriptive statements about a given corpus" (Chomsky 1964, p. 11). Wilss 1982 is aware of this limitation, but defends it in so far as it can lead at least to the discovery of "statistical regularities". (p. 16)

process or not. Krings tries to do so. For him the task of empirical, process-oriented research on translation starts with "... the screening of the psycholinguistic structure of the translation process on the basis of data taken from concrete translation events ..." (1986, p. 24). However, when it comes to theory formation, he falls back on classification, because the theory will be concerned with "... how this structure of the translation process varies depending on the characteristics of the translator (e.g. his degree of translation competence), the characteristics of the text (e.g. text type), and the languages involved (e.g. closely related vs. typologically distant languages)" (Krings 1986, p. 24; translation my own).

Holz-Mänttäri's (1984) action-theoretic model does not fall back on classification: in fact it points out some of its weaknesses (see below). However, it does not really address the problem of evaluation either; the author keeps emphasizing that translators must aim at "functional adequacy" ("Funktionsgerechtheit"), but leaves this notion undefined. In fact, this exclusion of the evaluative aspect seems to be deliberate:

> "The methods, models and schemata presented are intended to make visible these [functional] dynamics. They are not meant to over-regulate, to choke intuition or to automatize processes. ... According to each case and need they can be used either meticulously or with generous selectiveness. For it is the expert that decides about the use of his instruments." (p. 127; translation my own)[11]

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11 Information processing models set up for translation, and most commonly they are proposed for oral translation (simultaneous interpretation), "... try to specify in detail the mental operations involved in a given process, and to outline the stages through which information is coded and transformed from the input to the appropriate response" (Flores d'Arcais 1978, p. 381). However, the "mental operations" surveyed do not really address the aspect of decision making. Cf. e.g. Massaro (1978) and

The multidisciplinary ambitions of translation theory can also be seen to follow from this descriptive orientation: in order to take into account non-linguistic factors that clearly have a bearing on translation, the descriptive-classificatory framework has to be extended to other domains like psychology, sociology and culture in general.

However, comprehensiveness is not the only problematic consequence of the descriptive-classificatory approach. There is another snag: since the generalisations are made in terms of classes, the theory is geared to dealing with sets of similar phenomena rather than with individual phenomena. However, this is not satisfactory because the translator is usually dealing with individual problems, as Holz-Mänttäri points out:

> "Typification does show up the typical but has the serious disadvantage of always ignoring just that which is decisive for the case in hand. But this is the very problem which the translator has to be able to solve and for which he must be given higher-order rules based on a theory." (1984, p. 16; translation my own)

This means that either the classificatory approach has to be satisfied with statistical rules that deal with sets of phenomena rather than with individuals, or its framework has to be refined to a point that allows the unique classification of every phenomenon in the domain. This not only further complicates the theoretical framework but leads to a loss of generalising power: the smaller the class of phenomena to which a statement applies, the less its generalising power, and statements that refer to single-member classes are no longer generalisations. Thus the problem of over-specification which we looked at

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Moser (1978), and Flores d'Arcais summary (1978).

above (section 2.3.2.1) can also be seen as a natural consequence of the descriptive-classificatory approach.

Finally, it seems that the problem of evaluation in translation can also be traced back, at least to a large degree, to the descriptive-classificatory approach. In the final analysis this approach is capable only of setting up and matching categories: it can categorise the phenomena in the source text, it can categorise those in the translated text, it can categorise functions etc., and make statements about matches and mismatches between phenomena in terms of the classes to which they have been assigned. Beyond that, however, it has no other principle to offer. The postulation of hierarchical structures is an attempt to incorporate value judgments into the classificatory framework, but strictly speaking does not have a methodological basis in that framework, which exhausts itself in classifying phenomena in terms of their intrinsic properties. Evaluation and decision-making, however, cannot be accounted for in this way: the value, significance, importance etc. of a phenomenon do not lie in its inherent properties, but in its relation to human beings.

4 Changes in scientific method

If this analysis is correct, then two basic changes in approach seem to be prerequisites for further progress in the study of translation: a shift in the domain of the theory away from "translational behaviour" (van den Broeck 1980) - either as 'product' or 'process' - and a shift away from the descriptive-classificatory approach. I believe that both these shifts have become possible with the development of the relevance theory of communication by Sperber and Wilson (1986a).

4.1 A shift in the domain of the theory

Relevance theory approaches communication from the point of view of competence rather than behaviour: it tries to give an explicit account of how the information-processing faculties of our mind enable us to communicate with one another. Its domain is therefore mental faculties rather than texts or processes of text production, and it is the aim of this study to explore the possibility of accounting for translation in terms of the communicative competence assumed to be part of our minds.[12]

This does not mean that the host of different factors noted as important in recent years are ignored: they are naturally covered in the only way in which they can have an influence on translation anyway - and that is as part of our mental life; no external factor has an influence on either the production or interpretation of a translation unless it has entered the mental life of either the translator or his audience. Its mere existence "out there" is not enough to influence the translation.

4.2 A shift from description to explanation

Relevance theory is not a descriptive-classificatory approach. It does not try to give an orderly description of complex phenomena by grouping them into classes, but

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12 This shift parallels "the shift of focus [...] from behavior or the products of behavior to states of the mind/brain that enter into behavior" initiated by Chomsky in the development of the generative approach to language (Chomsky 1986, p. 3). In other words, the development of relevance theory itself and of this particular application to translation can be seen as part of a wider shift in research programme (cf. Lakatos 1978).

tries instead to understand the complexities of communication in terms of cause-effect relationships, which, applied to our mental life, are taken to mean computational, and particularly inferential, relationships. Furthermore, because it is tied in with a psychological optimisation principle, relevance theory provides a natural basis for an empirical account of evaluation and decision-making.

4.3 Translation as communication?

Before introducing relevance theory in more detail, it is worth pointing out that the application of relevance theory entails that translation is being looked at as part of communication.

This step may not seem unproblematic at this point in the history of translation theory, mainly because of the strong feeling, noted above, that translation covers issues too wide for any one discipline.

However, this is not necessarily a valid objection, for two reasons. Firstly, as just indicated, the motivation for a multidisciplinary approach is largely tied in with the choice of behaviour as the domain of the theory. If we can develop an account of translational competence that can accommodate the influence of a wide range of factors without describing and classifying them with respect to their various domains, then there is no a priori reason for a multidisciplinary approach, and hence no a priori objection to a communication-based approach.

Secondly, the reason why communication-theoretic approaches have been felt inadequate is strongly related to

the particular model of communication used. So far, virtually all attempts to treat translation within communication theory have relied on some variety of what Sperber and Wilson (1986a) call the "code model" of communication, that is, a model that considers verbal communication to be essentially a matter of the encoding, transmission and decoding of "messages". In recent years a number of translation theorists (e.g. Reiss and Vermeer 1984, Krings 1986, Wilss 1988) have questioned the adequacy of this model, and in view of the basic inadequacies observed by Sperber and Wilson (1986a), these criticisms seem well justified.

However, it is not clear why this should have been thought sufficient reason to regard translation as beyond the domain of communication altogether, a position taken, for example, by Reiss and Vermeer (1984) and Holz-Mänttäri (1984) in their action-theoretic approaches. The fact that a particular approach to communication is inadequate does not necessarily mean that any communicative approach is inadequate. As we shall see (cf. especially chapter 7), there are, in fact, strong reasons to believe that translation is indeed best handled as a matter of communication.

The next chapter will be devoted to an outline of relevant parts of the theory.

Chapter 2

A relevance-theoretic approach

This chapter is intended as an introduction to relevance theory as presented in Sperber and Wilson (1986a), (1986b), (1987), and Wilson and Sperber (1985, 1988a, 1988b). The first three sections will introduce some basic concepts relevant to our study. The last section will concentrate on the notion of "interpretive resemblance"; since I want to apply this notion to translation, I shall discuss issues arising in the particular case where one utterance or text is seen as interpretively resembling another.[1] Additional relevance-theoretic notions will be introduced and discussed in later chapters as the need arises.

1 The inferential nature of communication

For Sperber and Wilson (1986a), the crucial mental faculty that enables human beings to communicate with one another is the ability to draw inferences from people's behaviour.[2] Looked at from the communicator's end, his task

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1 Following Sperber and Wilson, the term 'interpreting' and its various derivations (interpretation, interpretive etc.) will be used in the wide sense of deriving the intended meaning from a stimulus; to avoid confusion with the translation-specific notion of '(simultaneous) interpretation', the production of such oral representations of an original text or utterance in another language will be referred to as 'oral translation', except in quotations from the literature.

2 Strictly speaking, relevance theory applies not to all communication in the sense of any kind of information transfer, but to "ostensive communication" or, more explicitly, to "ostensive-inferential communication": "Ostensive-inferential communication consists in making manifest to an audience one's intention to make manifest

is to produce a stimulus - verbal or otherwise - from which the audience can infer what he "means", or, in the terms of relevance theory, what his *informative intention* is.

Thus in the case of non-verbal communication, seeing that a colleague is looking for a seat in a fairly full seminar room, I might wave and point to a seat next to me; these movements would be the stimulus and my informative intention would be that my colleague will infer from the stimulus I produced that there is a free seat next to me where he could sit down.

The same is true of verbal stimuli; thus if someone asked me, "Can you tell me where the bus to Maidenhead leaves from?", I might reply, "Sorry, I am a stranger here myself", with the intention that the inquirer would infer from my answer that I am unable to supply the information he is looking for.

Of course there is a difference between non-verbal and verbal or linguistic communication, but this difference lies not in the presence or absence of inference, but rather in the degree of explicitness which the stimulus can achieve:

> "... the most striking feature of linguistic communication is that it can achieve a degree of precision and complexity rarely achieved in non-verbal communication." (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 174)

As we shall see, this extraordinary explicitness is due to a range of properties of language, but foremost among

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a basic layer of information", this "basic layer of information" being the communicator's informative intention (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 54).

these is the fact that verbal expressions are assigned *semantic representations*.

2 Semantic representations

Since the term "semantic" is used in different ways by different people, we need to clarify what we mean here when talking about "semantic representation".

In the cognitive framework assumed by relevance theory, linguistic expressions are dealt with first of all by a component or module of the mind that specializes in processing language data.[3] This component is essentially a coding device which takes as input linguistic formulae and *on the basis of their linguistic properties* assigns to them mental formulae that "mean" or "represent" something, that is, semantic representations. Thus, more technically, we use the term "semantic representation" here to refer to mental representations that are the output of the language module of the mind.

However, because the language module of the mind handles only linguistic data, the semantic representations which it produces as output are not normally complete and fully truth-conditional propositions or assumptions, but rather *assumption schemas* or "blueprints for propositions" (Blakemore 1987, p. 15) which need to be developed and enriched in a number of different ways.[4] Mental repre-

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3 Thus relevance theory assumes a modular model of the mind, as proposed by Fodor (1983). Its view of the language faculty is essentially the one assumed by Chomsky (e.g. 1980, 1986, and others). For an overview and interesting discussion of these assumptions cf. Carston 1988b.
4 Cf. also Carston (1988a). See Blakemore (1987), pp. 15ff for an argument as to why a truth-conditional theory of meaning cannot be part of the grammar.

sentations that have been processed and completed in this way to become fully truth-conditional are called *propositional forms*.

Consider the following example:

(1) On a walk in the woods:
    (a) Sheila: I heard something in that bush.
    (b) Fiona: No, it was only the wind.

The meaning expressed linguistically in Sheila's remark is extremely vague: the word "something" can be used to refer to any non-human entity at all, including the wind or the rustling it might produce in the leaves of a bush. However, Fiona's reaction shows that she understands something much more definite than that, and in particular that she thought Sheila intended to refer to something other than the wind, perhaps an animal.

Fiona's answer also indicates that she took Sheila to be referring to an event that had happened just in the last few moments or so. However, there is nothing at all in the linguistic meaning of Sheila's utterance that ties it to that particular time. Thus in a different context Sheila might use that same sentence to refer to something she heard at a different time, in a different place, involving a different bush etc..

Thus in relevance theory the fact that on the one hand linguistic expressions do have some meaning, and yet that this meaning is not necessarily identical to the meaning actually conveyed by that expression on any given occasion, is accounted for by the claim that verbal communication involves two distinct kinds of mental representations: semantic representations that are the output of the language module of the mind, and thoughts with

propositional forms that are derived from semantic representations by further processing. The way in which audiences get from semantic representations to propositional forms crucially involves the use of *context*.

3 Context and the principle of relevance

In relevance theory, the notion of context is a psychological one: "A context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world." (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 15) More precisely, the context that is used in the interpretation of a text or utterance is part of the mutual *cognitive environment* of communicator and audience.[5]

The notion of cognitive environment is a very wide one; it includes information that can be perceived in the physical environment, that can be retrieved from memory - for example, information derived from preceding utterances would be stored there - and furthermore information that can be inferred from these two sources. Thus the source from which contextual information can be derived is potentially vast:

> "A context in this sense is not limited to information about the immediate physical environment or the immediately preceding utterances: expectations about the future, scientific hypotheses or religious beliefs, anecdotal memories, general cultural assumptions, beliefs about the mental state of the speaker, may all play a role in interpretation." (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 15f)

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5 The notion of "mutual cognitive environment" is a technical one, and is defined as follows: "Any shared cognitive environment in which it is manifest which people share it is what we call a *mutual cognitive environment*" (Sperber and Wilson 1986a p. 41)

All this information could be viewed as the potential context of an utterance.

While this notion of *potential* context is certainly wide enough as a starting point, the crucial question is: how do hearers manage to select the *actual*, speaker-intended assumptions from the vast range of assumptions they *could* derive from their environment or from memory? As we saw in the example just given, communication can require the use of quite specific assumptions, and misunderstandings are likely to arise when wrong assumptions are used.

The first consideration that needs to be taken into account here is that not all the assumptions available from the potential context are equally accessible at any given point in time. For example, as you are reading this text, information that you have acquired about communication and the problem of context selection will most likely be much more accessible to you than information about who was present at your tenth birthday party. It might take some hard thinking to recall that information at this moment. Yet on another occasion, perhaps when you are reminiscing with a former classmate about the "olden days", that information might become easily accessible, and it might require more effort at that point to recall what different people have said about context selection.

This means that the different degrees of accessibility of contextual assumptions make themselves felt by the amount of *effort* their retrieval requires in a particular act of communication. This sensitivity to processing effort is one of the crucial factors that make inferential communication possible: it seems that communication, no doubt like many other human activities, is determined by the desire for optimization of resources, and one aspect of

optimization is to keep the effort spent to a minimum. Applied to context selection, this means that hearers will always start out with those contextual assumptions that are most easily accessible to them. Thus by its effect on the accessibility of assumptions, the structure of memory provides the basis for a very effective constraint on the selection of context, given the general principle that people will try to spend as little processing effort on supplying contextual information as possible. Note that this constraint is a perfectly general one - it makes no reference to the kind of contextual assumptions involved, whether they are cultural or derived from an earlier part of the text or whatever.

The other aspect of optimization is, of course, that of obtaining benefits. Relevance theory assumes that - put in very general terms - human beings have a natural interest in improving their understanding of the world around them, which consists of the assumptions about the world which they have stored in memory. Hence they expect that the effort spent in comprehension will modify the contextual assumptions they brought to the communication act in some way. Technically such context modifications are referred to as *contextual effects*, and these can be of three kinds: they can consist in the derivation of *contextual implications*, in the *strengthening*, or confirmation, of assumptions already held, or in the *elimination* of assumptions due to a contradiction.

Let us briefly look at these three kinds of contextual effects. Contextual implications are inferences that follow not from the propositional content of an utterance alone, nor from the contextual assumptions alone, but only from the inferential combination of the two sets of propositions. Consider the following example:

(2) (a) Margaret: Could you have a quick look at my printer - it's not working right.

(b) Mike: I have got an appointment at eleven o'clock.

Although both the question and the answer are perfectly clear in their semantic content, if this is all the information we have, we cannot know what Mike's reply implies: will he be able to have a look at the printer or not? What is missing is, of course, knowledge of the context, more specifically, knowledge of the time of utterance.

Suppose first of all that the hearer has the following contextual assumptions available:

(3) (a) There are only five minutes until eleven o'clock.
(b) The printer problem is not an obvious one, but will require opening it up.
(c) Opening up the printer will take more than five minutes.

Combined with these assumptions Mike's reply will imply (4):

(4) Mike is not able to have a look at the printer now.

This particular implication is a contextual implication in the sense defined: it does not follow from the propositional content of Mike's reply (2) alone, nor does it follow from the contextual assumptions in (3) alone, but it does follow from the inferential combination of both.

The strengthening of contextual assumptions can be illustrated by the following example:

(5) (a) Dorothy: I have a hunch that Gill is looking for a new job.
(b) Francis: Yeah, she is studying job ads whenever she's got a spare minute.

By her utterance Dorothy indicates that she is not sure of the truth of what she said. If we now assume that Dorothy has the following contextual assumption accessible:

(6) Someone reading job advertisements is probably looking for a new job,

then Francis' answer is valuable in that it supplies information that can serve as further evidence that Dorothy's assumption may be right. In terms of relevance theory this is due to the fact that assumptions can be held with varying degrees of strength, or conviction, and that the strength of an assumption increases when it is implied by additional assumptions likely to be true.

Lastly, contextual effects can consist in the erasure of previously held assumptions:

(7) (a) Philip: We have to call another meeting. I don't think that Christine is going to come, so we will be one person short of a quorum.
(b) Linda: No need for cancellation, I see Christine just coming up the drive.

In this example, Philip has just made the assumption that the meeting will have to be cancelled since it lacks a

quorum. However, by her remark Linda supplies information that is likely to prove Philip's assumption wrong: if Christine is a regular member of the committee, and if she is, in fact, coming to attend the meeting, her presence would give the committee a quorum and hence obviate the need for a postponement of the meeting.

The erasure of previously held assumptions can result when contradictions arise: in this example the propositional content of Linda's remark contradicts Philip's claim. In this case, relevance theory assumes that the device in our mind that carries out this inferential processing proceeds as follows:

> "... when two assumptions are found to contradict each other, if it is possible to compare their strengths, and if one is found to be stronger than the other, then the device automatically erases the weaker assumption." (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 114)

In our example, Philip's assumption that the meeting needs to be postponed is an inference involving the assumption that Christine is not coming to the meeting. However, that assumption now stands against Linda's claim that she sees Christine coming up the driveway. Since information available from perception is usually assigned much greater strength than information based on inference, it is most likely that in Philip's mind the assumption that Christine is not coming to the meeting will be erased, and replaced by the assumption that she *is* coming.

Having had a brief look at some of the effort or "cost" and the benefits involved in interpreting utterances, we can now introduce the notion that shows how the two relate to each other, and that is the notion of *relevance*, which Sperber and Wilson (1986a) define in terms of the following conditions:

> "*Relevance*
> *Extent condition 1:* an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that its contextual effects in this context are large.
>
> *Extent condition 2:* an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that the effort required to process it in this context is small." (p. 125; italics as in original)

The central claim of relevance theory is that human communication crucially creates an expectation of *optimal relevance*, that is, an expectation on the part of the hearer that his attempt at interpretation will yield *adequate contextual effects* at *minimal processing cost*. The reason why hearers have this expectation lies in the *principle of relevance:*

> "*Principle of relevance*
> Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance. (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 158; italics as in original)

Thus whenever someone shows that he wishes to communicate, he implicitly and automatically conveys the assumption that the hearer can expect to derive adequate contextual effects for the minimum necessary effort. As Sperber and Wilson show, this assumption has an important consequence for the theory of utterance interpretation: the hearer has the right to assume that the first interpretation he arrives at that a rational speaker might have expected (a) to yield adequate contextual effects *and* (b) to put the hearer to no unjustifiable processing effort in obtaining those effects is the interpretation intended by the communicator.[6] Such an interpretation,

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6 In Sperber and Wilson 1986a there is a certain amount of ambivalence in the formulation of condition (a). In a number of places, the authors state that it is the interpretation (I) which is to have adequate contextual effects; for example, the definition of the "presumption of

according to Sperber and Wilson, is *consistent with the principle of relevance*. And this is the answer of relevance theory as to how hearers can infer what the intended interpretation or meaning of an utterance is: it is the interpretation that is consistent with the principle of relevance, and there is never more than one interpretation that fulfils this condition.[7]

This is why we are able to make use of implied information. In example (2) above, the principle of relevance explains why we can understand Mike's reply to suggest more than it expresses: the assumption that all Mike intended to convey was the information that he was going to have an appointment at eleven o'clock would not be consistent with the principle of relevance since it would amount only to the addition of an assumption to the stock of assumptions already held, and adding assumptions to

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optimal relevance" says that "The set of assumptions {I} which the communicator intends to make manifest to the addressee is relevant enough to make it worth the addressee's while to process the ostensive stimulus" (1986a, p. 158). In other places, however, they say that what the communicator conveys by claiming someone's attention is that "... the *stimulus* is relevant enough to be worth the audience's attention" (1986a, p. 156; emphasis my own). However, as confirmed by the authors (personal communication), the requirement should be that the process by which the interpretation is derived from the stimulus must lead to adequate contextual effects. This seems necessary in order to allow for the fact that implicated conclusions themselves can count as contextual effects. If the interpretation itself had to have adequate contextual effects, then the implicated conclusions of an utterance would in their turn need to have contextual effects. This does not seem to be a necessary requirement, and it would entail that only those contextual implications which the communicator does *not* intend to convey make for relevance.

7 There may, however, be no interpretation that fulfils this condition. In that event the communication act fails, and the hearer probably has to ask for further clarification as to what the speaker meant.

existing ones does not count as a contextual effect, that is, is not experienced as a "reward" for the processing effort spent. Further processing must be undertaken in the search for adequate contextual effects.

In its search for adequate contextual effects, the audience will also assume that it is not being put to any gratuitous expenditure of processing effort. And this is part of the answer to a question raised earlier: how does an audience manage to select the right set of contextual assumptions from all it knows, could observe or infer? In the pursuit of optimal relevance it turns first to highly accessible information, looking for adequate contextual effects; if the use of this information does yield contextual effects adequate to the occasion in a way the speaker could have manifestly foreseen, then it will assume that it has used the right, that is speaker-intended, contextual information.

The expression "adequate to the occasion" is important because there is no absolute level of relevance that is adequate to every occasion; thus when engaging in a friendly chat with a stranger at the bus stop one would not normally be expecting a high degree of relevance, hence would not be looking for a wide range of contextual effects. By contrast, when listening to a paper given by a leading scholar in one's field of study, one would expect a much greater number of contextual effects, and would also be prepared to invest more processing effort to recover them, perhaps even read a book written by that scholar in order to understand better what he said.

So far we have looked at the principle of relevance mainly from the hearer's point of view, but it is equally, if not more, important from the communicator's end:

> "It is left to the communicator to make correct assumptions about the codes and contextual information that the audience will have accessible and be likely to use in the comprehension process. The responsibility for avoiding misunderstanding also lies with the speaker, so that all the hearer has to do is go ahead and use whatever code and contextual information come most easily to hand." (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 43)

Thus it is the communicator's responsibility to express himself in such a way that the first interpretation that will come to the hearer's mind and that he will find optimally relevant will indeed be the one the communicator intended to convey. The fulfilment of this condition is crucial, since the audience has no other means by which to determine what the communicator wanted to communicate.

Suppose, for example, I have met a former classmate by the name of John Smith whom I had not seen for many years. Let us assume further that I want to share this information with a friend of mine who had been a classmate of John's together with me. I could simply say to my friend:

(8) I met John Smith today.

Now it is likely my friend would find it difficult to work out which John Smith I was referring to, given that he had not thought about this individual for many years. In fact, given that the name John Smith is very common, my friend would be likely to think of some John Smith other than our common classmate from primary school years, perhaps a business friend by the same name, and so misunderstanding would be likely to arise.

In this situation I could increase the relevance of my utterance considerably by saying something like (9):

(9) Do you remember John Smith, the fellow we used to tease way back in our school days? I met him today.

Those introductory words would guide the hearer in searching his memory for the intended referent and hence considerably ease his processing load. To be consistent with the principle of relevance, an utterance must achieve adequate contextual effects and *put the hearer to no unjustifiable effort in achieving them.* In the circumstances described, (9) would be consistent with the principle of relevance, whereas (8) would not.[8]

4 Descriptive and interpretive use

It is part of our common experience that people do not always say what they mean; for example, we say we have a thousand things to do when, in actual fact, we can list perhaps some twenty or thirty jobs; or we talk about someone being "a real gangster" when we do not mean to imply that he has committed actual crimes but are perhaps expressing our attitude to the way he goes about his

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8 This is of course on the assumption that the saving in processing effort achieved by that additional sentence outweighs the effort required to process that sentence; if not, utterance (8) would have been the more appropriate one. This explains two important points about communication: firstly it explains why unnecessary reminders are felt to hinder successful communication: they involve additional processing effort without adequate gains in contextual effects; secondly, it explains also why there are occasions when it *is* appropriate to express information that is actually already known to the audience: it is appropriate under those circumstances where the processing of the "reminder" can be assumed to be "cheaper" in terms of processing effort than an unaided search of memory.

business; normally this does not cause any problem but is understood in the intended way.

While this behaviour may seem peculiar at first - and, for example, the Gricean account (Grice 1975) of such uses assumes that it involves the violation of certain norms -, Sperber and Wilson (1986a, chapter 4, section 8) point out that it makes good sense within the "cost-sensitive" framework of relevance theory because "loose talk" allows for very economical communication. Suppose I want to communicate that I think that Bill in his business behaviour tends to be rather threatening and to bully people, that he does so with the help of other, equally sinister people, that he tends to be ruthless in his practices - then rather than expressing all these thoughts separately it is much more economical and efficient to express them with the utterance "Bill is a real gangster" - even though I do not mean to imply that he is an actual criminal.

The way relevance theory accounts for such "loose talk" (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1986b) is by claiming that the relationship between what we say and the thoughts we intend to communicate is one of interpretive resemblance - in other words, we do not necessarily say what we think, but more often than not what we say *interpretively resembles* what we intend to communicate.

In order to see more clearly what this involves, it might be helpful to take a closer look at how our minds are assumed to entertain thoughts.

4.1 Interpretive resemblance between propositional forms

In the framework of cognitive psychology assumed by relevance theory, a thought is a mental representation that has a propositional form. This propositional form can be used to relate the thought in question to some state of affairs in some (possible) world - that is, to that state of affairs of which the propositional form is or would be true. This idea is, of course, very familiar from truth-conditional semantics. Within relevance theory, this way of entertaining a mental representation is called a *descriptive use* of that representation: it is entertained as a description of the state of affairs of which it is thought to be true.

There is, however, another way our mind can entertain a thought, and this also follows from the fact that a thought has a propositional form. An essential property of propositional forms is that they have logical properties: it is in virtue of these properties that they can contradict each other, imply each other and enter into other logical relationships with each other. Since all propositional forms have logical properties, two propositional forms may have some logical properties in common. Accordingly, we can say that mental representations whose propositional forms share logical properties *resemble* each other in virtue of these shared logical properties.[9] Such resemblance between propositional forms

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9 It should be noted that relevance theory assumes a much wider notion of "logic" than that of "standard logics": "Standard logics make a radical distinction between concepts such as *and*, *if ... then*, and *or*, which are regarded as proper logical concepts, and concepts such as *when*, *know*, *run*, *bachelor*, which are considered non-logical. Following another tradition, we regard these

is called *interpretive resemblance.*[10]

What logical properties can give rise to interpretive resemblance? Wilson and Sperber (1988a) define interpretive resemblance as follows:

> "... two propositional forms P and Q (and by extension, two thoughts or utterances with P and Q as their propositional forms) *interpretively resemble* one another in a context C to the extent that they share their analytic and contextual implications in the context C." (p. 138; italics as in original)

Turning first to matters of terminology, we need to clarify what analytic implications are. Analytic implications are implications obtained by a process of deduction in which only analytic rules have applied, and where an analytic rule is formally distinct in that it "... takes only a single assumption as input" (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 104). For example, the concept 'brother' can be assumed to have associated with it the following analytic rule (or 'meaning postulate'):

(10) (a) Input: (X - brother - Y)
(b) Output: (X - male sibling - Y)

This inferential rule expresses the fact that the occurrence of the concept 'brother' in a propositional form (symbolized as the string of concepts 'X - brother - Y') warrants that the replacement of the concept 'brother' in this string will lead to another true propositional form: 'X - male sibling - Y'. Crucially, this rule requires

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other concepts as also determining logical implications." (Sperber and Wilson 1986a p. 87) For further details see chapter 2, section 2 of their book.

10 This is the term used in Wilson and Sperber (1988a). Sperber and Wilson (1986a) talk simply about "resemblance."

only a single propositional form as input, hence the analytic implications are all implications that follow from the propositional form alone.

Analytic implications contrast with contextual implications, which were already introduced above (cf. p. 46); as mentioned there, contextual implications do not follow from the propositional form alone nor from the context alone but from the inferential combination of the two.[11]

For a clearer understanding of what is involved in interpretive resemblance between propositional forms, let us consider some examples:

(11) (a) Bill likes his new toys.
(b) William likes his new toys.

Let us assume that these two sentences represent two thoughts, and that the two thoughts are about the same situation, that is, that they have the same propositional form. In this case these two thoughts share *all* their logical properties. They share all their analytic implications - whatever is analytically implied by one thought is also implied by the other; and from this it follows that they also share all their contextual implications in any context - whatever implications one thought may have in a given context, the other thought will have in that context too.

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11 Contextual implications are a subset of synthetic implications; synthetic implications involve the application of synthetic rules, where "... a synthetic rule takes two separate assumptions as input" (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 104).

Of course, resemblance does not have to be complete:

(12) (a) Jack bought a new Mercedes.
(b) Don bought a car.

Again assuming that these sentences stand for particular thoughts, they would share, for example, the entailment (13):

(13) Someone bought a car.

They would, however, differ in other properties. For example, while (14) is an entailment of (12)(a), it is not an entailment of (12)(b):

(14) Jack bought something.

Thus, as is to be expected, resemblance between mental representations is a matter of degree.

As may have been noticed, in both the examples considered the thoughts in question shared at least some analytic implications, that is, they overlapped at least in part of their semantically determined meaning. However, this is not a necessary condition of interpretive resemblance. In fact, two thoughts can resemble each other interpretively in a certain context if, for example, they share some contextual implication in that context. Thus (15) can be said to interpretively resemble (12)(a) in the context of (16):

(15) For my colleague only the best is good enough.

(16) (a) Someone who buys a Mercedes has money to spare.
(b) Someone for whom only the best is good enough has money to spare.
(c) Jack is my colleague.

It is clear that while (12)(a) and (15) do not share analytic implications, given the set of contextual assumptions in (16), both (12)(a) and (15) will yield the same contextual implication (17):

(17) Jack has money to spare.

As we shall see, this point will be important in our discussion later on.

Now given this possible resemblance relationship between mental representations, our mind can entertain a mental representation or thought not in virtue of its being true of some state of affairs, but in virtue of its interpretive resemblance to some other representation. This use of representations is called *interpretive use* in relevance theory. For example, suppose that I have read in the newspaper that young people in the age range from 18-25 years are higher-risk drivers. I could think about this claim in two different ways: I could entertain this as a true thought, that is, as a description of a certain state of affairs; alternatively, I could think about this as a claim that someone else has made: that is, I could entertain this thought in virtue of its resemblance with someone else's thought, without commitment to its truth as a descriptive statement. In this case, in the terminology of relevance theory, I would be entertaining this thought as an "interpretation" of someone else's thought.

4.2 Interpretive resemblance between thoughts and utterances

This possibility of using a representation either descriptively or interpretively is not limited to mental representations, but is open to any representation that has a propositional form. Thus to the extent that utterances have propositional forms, they, too, can be used either descriptively or interpretively. In fact, this is one basic "ambiguity" that needs to be resolved by the audience in any instance of verbal communication: whether the speaker is using the utterance descriptively or interpretively. While speakers have the option of indicating by the form of their utterance how they mean what they say, they are by no means always obliged to do so.

Consider the following exchange:

(18) (a) Sarah: I really have a rather poor appetite these days.
(b) Joe: It's the Chernobyl accident.
(c) Sarah: Do you really think so?
(d) Joe: Actually, no; but Chernobyl gets blamed for anything these days, doesn't it?

In this example, (18)(b) is obviously meant interpretively, reflecting what people in general believe, rather than Joe's own conviction, but there is nothing in the utterance to mark this.[12]

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12 This is not due to the written form of the example; Joe could, of course, give a clue to Sarah that he was not expressing his own belief, by using some kind of mocking intonation or a special facial expression, but he need not do either - and in the example in hand, he probably did not, as Sarah's question seems to indicate.

Returning to our earlier sample utterance, "Bill is a real gangster" (p. 55 above), this is an instance of interpretive use because the proposition expressed by my utterance "Bill is a real gangster" interpretively resembles the thoughts I want to convey. In this instance the assumptions which I want to communicate - "Bill's behaviour is threatening", "Bill bullies people", "Bill uses other sinister people's help", "Bill is ruthless" - are shared by the proposition I expressed because they are all contextual implications of my utterance.

At the same time, there may well be other implications, both analytic and contextual, that I do not want to communicate by my utterance - for example, that Bill is part of a criminal association, that he has committed a crime, that he ought$_A^{to}$ be taken to court, that he has arms etc. - though in other contexts these assumptions might well be communicated by the same token sentence "Bill is a real gangster".

This means that it is crucial for the successful use of "loose talk" that the audience be able to find out which of all the potential implications the communicator intended to communicate. How can the audience find this out? In the same way that it always does: on the basis of consistency with the principle of relevance. In other words, the audience will assume that the first interpretation of the utterance consistent with the principle of relevance is the one intended by the communicator.

From the communicator's point of view this means that for communicative success the proposition he expresses must be such that he can reasonably expect that the first set of analytic and/or contextual implications it conveys in

consistency with the principle of relevance is the one he intended to communicate. When the communicator succeeds in this, his utterance can be said to be a *faithful* representation of his thoughts: the interpretation it conveys is the one the communicator intended to communicate.

Note that this also allows for the case where the communicator wants to communicate exactly what he says - as is done in ordinary assertions; in this case the proposition he expresses interpretively resembles the intended interpretation in *all* analytic and contextual implications. When one proposition resembles another completely in this way, then it is called a *literal interpretation* of that other proposition. Hence an ordinary assertion is simply the limiting case of interpretive resemblance - when the utterance produced conveys a literal interpretation of the speaker's thought, resembling that thought in all analytic and contextual implications.

This means, in fact, that "... every utterance comes with a guarantee of faithfulness ..." - that is, in each case "the speaker guarantees that her utterance is a faithful enough interpretation of the thought she wants to communicate" (Wilson and Sperber 1988a, p. 139).

Thus we see that relevance theory already comes with a notion of faithfulness as a natural and central part of its theoretical framework. It does not need to be defined for particular text or utterance types, contexts etc. but is determined for each occasion by the principle of relevance and the cognitive environment mutually shared by the communicator and his audience. What remains to be done is to examine what this general notion entails for translational faithfulness, whether it can stand as it is

or needs to be adapted in some way. However, before we can do this we need to take a closer look at interpretive resemblance between utterances.

As we saw in section 4.1 above (p. 57), interpretive resemblance is defined primarily as a relationship between propositional forms; its application to representations such as thoughts or utterances is only by extension - in virtue of the fact that such representations have propositional forms. However, natural language expressions seem to have a number of properties that require special consideration here, and so we shall turn our attention next to an investigation of the various factors involved in interpretive resemblance between utterances.

4.3 Interpretive resemblance between utterances

Firstly, it would seem that when we say that an utterance "has" a propositional form we mean something different from when we say that a mental representation or thought "has" a certain propositional form: whereas the propositional form of a thought is presumably fully determined by the inherent properties of that thought, the propositional form of an utterance is not necessarily determined by the inherent linguistic and non-linguistic properties of that utterance. The linguistically encoded logical form is usually semantically incomplete, and hence tokens of the same sentence, for example "Joe bumped his head yesterday", can be used to convey an unlimited number of propositional forms, depending on the context in which they are used: on what day the utterance is made, what individual by the name of "Joe" is part of that context, and so on.

From the communicator's end, there is no problem: for him the propositional form of the utterance he produces is

the one$_A^{he}$ has in mind, but obviously this will not help the audience since they do not know what the communicator has in mind. In fact, for them the natural language expression is the means by which they hope to discover what the communicator has in mind - and their hope is usually fulfilled with the help of the principle of relevance. Hence, as far as the audience is concerned, when processing an utterance they will assume that the "... right propositional form is the one that leads to an overall interpretation which is consistent with the principle of relevance" (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 184). From this perspective the propositional form of an utterance is context-dependent in the way described above: for the same expression different propositional forms may turn out to lead to an overall interpretation consistent with the principle of relevance depending on the context in which it is used.

Hence when we talk about the "propositional form of an utterance", we can refer to one of two things: we can refer to the propositional form which the communicator intends to express by the utterance or we can refer to the propositional form which leads to an overall interpretation which the audience finds consistent with the principle of relevance. The success of an act of communication will be determined in part by whether or not the two are the same. This is an important point we shall have to keep in mind.

Another peculiarity of natural language expressions is that they can and often do convey information non-representationally, that is, independently of the conceptual content mediated by the propositional form. For example, the English greeting *hello* does not represent anything truth-conditionally - there is no state of affairs of which it could be said to be "true." In chapter

6 (section 7) I will suggest that such expressions convey information in virtue of an appropriate description of them where an appropriate description is again one that leads to an overall interpretation consistent with the principle of relevance. Such descriptions normally make use of the audience's knowledge about the language used. Thus an English speaker's knowledge about his language includes the knowledge that the word *hello* is used a general informal greeting, and this knowledge will figure in the description of any act of communication when he is greeted with this word.[13] Connotative meaning and some other stylistic properties work in similar ways.

A third important characteristic of natural language expressions is that they can influence their interpretations by guiding the search for relevance, that is, by imposing constraints on the relevance of the utterance in which they occur (cf. Blakemore 1987, Blass 1988 and forthcoming, Gutt 1988a). This can be done in one of two ways: either by lexical means, for example by the use of words or morphemes that indicate that the proposition expressed is to achieve relevance, say, as the conclusion or a premise of an argument; or it can be done by the exploitation of structural means, such as foregrounding by clefting or phonological stress.

The following diagram may be a useful sketch of how utterances can influence their interpretations.

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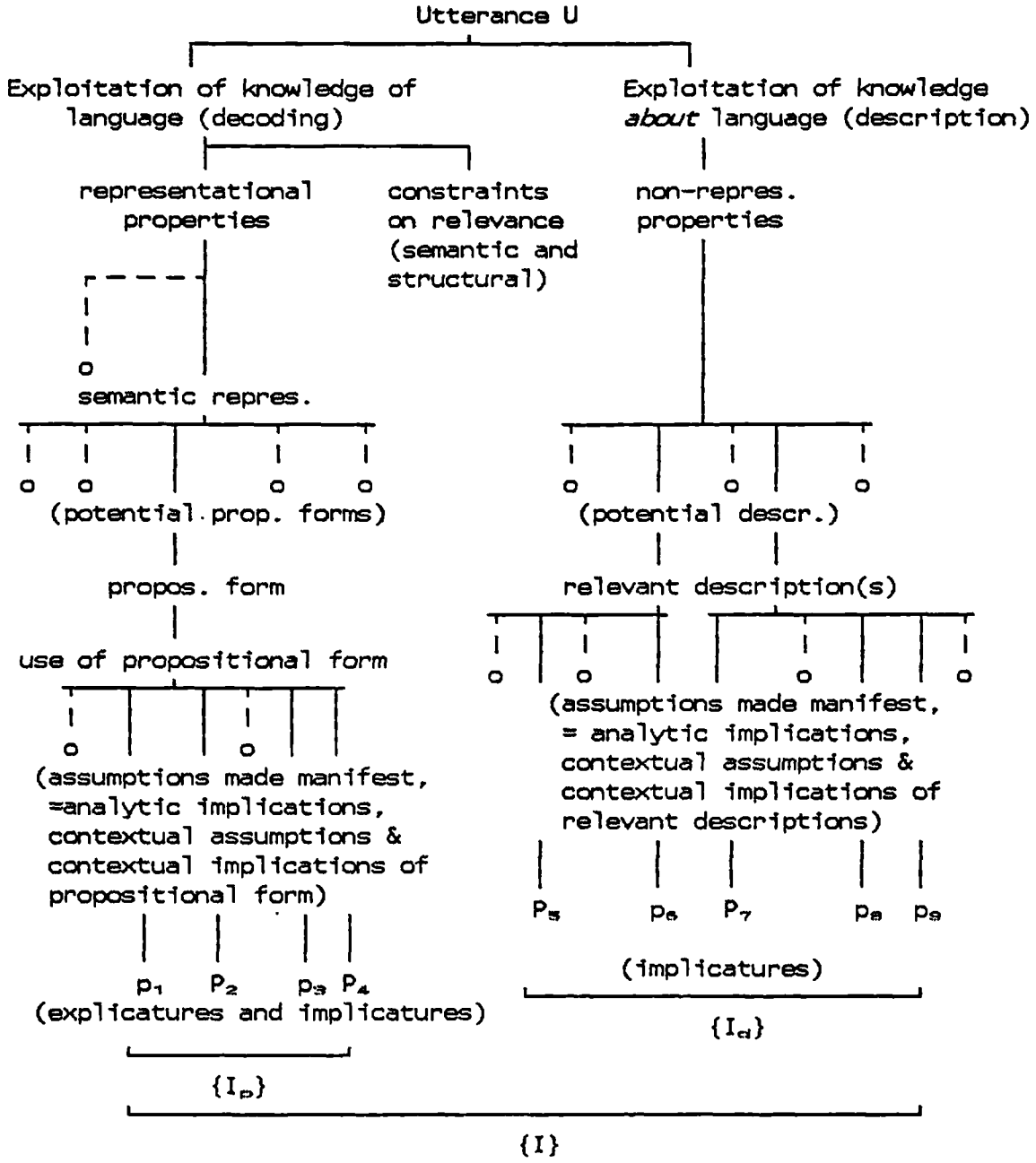
13 This knowledge *about* language is psychologically distinct from the individual's knowledge *of* his language which characterizes his linguistic competence, as pointed out e.g. by Smith and Wilson (1979), ch. 2, esp. pp. 36ff.

DIAGRAM 1

How utterances can affect their interpretations



Key:

o = logical form or assumption not used in the interpretation process

P_n = strongly communicated assumptions

p_n = weakly communicated assumptions (*Note:* this is not to imply that there are only two degrees of strength)

$\{I_p\}$ = assumptions communicated via propositional form

$\{I_d\}$ = assumptions communicated via description

Solid lines indicate actual, broken lines potential paths of interpretation.

Starting from the top node of tree diagram 1, an utterance U can be processed using two kinds of knowledge: knowledge of language, that is, linguistic competence in the narrow sense, and knowledge about language. Knowledge of language is exploited by decoding, which involves the recovery of a semantic representation (or more than one in the case of linguistic ambiguity, as indicated by the dotted left-hand branch). It also serves to recover constraints on relevance imposed by the semantic and/or structural properties of the utterance.

The semantic representation, being incomplete, could be used to represent a number of different propositional forms, marked as "potential propositional forms" in the diagram. The criterion of consistency with the principle of relevance will lead to the construction of one particular propositional form.

Consistency with the principle of relevance will also help the audience to determine how the propositional form of the utterance is used by the speaker. Thus it will determine whether the propositional form is intended as a literal interpretation of the speaker's thought, or whether it is used loosely (cf. last section above). It will also determine whether the thought of the speaker which it represents is meant descriptively or interpretively, that is, whether it is presented as the speaker's own belief or whether it is presented as someone else's belief. At this stage, then, the audience will embed the propositional form in an assumption schema that reflects the attitude with which the propositional form is understood to be represented. Thus the audience may infer for example that the speaker believes that p, as might be the case in an ordinary assertion, or it may infer that the speaker presents p as someone else's belief, as might be the case with a reported or an ironical utterance.

Via the assumption schema and the propositional form embedded in it, the utterance makes manifest a whole set of assumptions, such as the analytic implications of the propositional form, contextual assumptions accessed via the encyclopaedic entries of the concepts present in the propositional form, plus contextual implications.[14]

Again, consistency with the principle of relevance will enable the audience to identify the subset of all these assumptions which the speaker intended to communicate. If the speaker intended to communicate the propositional form of the utterance, then the utterance would have an explicature; any contextual assumptions or implications intended to be communicated by it would together constitute its implicatures.

Returning to the top and going down the right hand branch of the tree, the audience can use their knowledge *about* language to construct a description of the stimulus. Thus, if Alfred has greeted Bill saying, "Hello", Bill could construct the description, "Alfred said 'hello'". A number of different descriptions might be possible, but the audience would construct only those that seemed consistent with the principle of relevance.

These descriptions would, in turn, make manifest further assumptions, just as the propositional form did; thus the encyclopaedic knowledge that *hello* is used as an informal greeting could give rise to the contextual implication that Alfred was greeting Bill when saying hello. Con-

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14 For more detail on encyclopaedic entries and other information associated with concepts see chapter 6, section 3.

sistency with the principle of relevance would, as always, enable the audience to identify the subset of assumptions which the communicator intended to convey.

This brief sketch is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather its main purpose is to enable us to see more clearly some significant ways in which interpretive resemblance between utterances differs from interpretive resemblance between propositional forms in the abstract.

The most pervasive difference is that identifying interpretive resemblance between utterances crucially involves the principle of relevance: as we saw, at virtually every point it is the principle of relevance that guides the audience in the interpretation process. This aspect is absent when we talk about interpretive resemblance between propositional forms as such, because the principle of relevance comes in only when someone engages in ostensive communication. Hence interpretive resemblance between utterances is generally a matter of what overlap there is in the sets of assumptions that are *communicated* by each utterance rather than merely a matter of sharing analytic and contextual implications.

This has a number of important consequences. Consider the following statement:

> "If two thoughts or utterances have the same propositional form, and hence share all their analytic implications, they also, of course, share all their contextual implications in every context" (Wilson and Sperber 1988a, p. 138).

While this statement seems true for interpretive resemblance between thoughts, its application to utterances is less straightforward, as the examples (19) and (20) show:

(19) So Charles has lost his car keys.

(20) After all, Charles has lost his car keys.

Assuming that these are two utterances, and assuming further that they are used in the same cognitive environment so that their propositional forms would be the same - referring to the same individual called "Charles", the same car, the same set of car keys etc. - one would still feel that these two utterances differ significantly in their overall interpretation.

The difference is, of course, due to the presence of the connectives *so* and *after all*. As Blakemore (1987) has argued, these connectives constrain the way that the utterance is relevant: thus utterance (19) is relevant as the conclusion to a contextually assumed argument, but (20) is relevant as premise in a contextually assumed argument. In other words, two utterances with identical propositional forms may differ in their interpretations precisely because the form of the utterance imposes different constraints on how the propositional form is to be related to the context, and hence on what contextual effects it is to have. This influence of the form of the utterance is indicated in diagram 1 above (p. 67) by the first node of the left-hand branch of the tree: the properties branch out into representational properties on the one hand, and "constraints on relevance" on the other.

Similarly, utterances (21) and (22) may well differ in their interpretations:

(21) Wife to husband: Fred has broken a window.
(22) Wife to husband: Your son has broken a window.

Both utterances could be said by a wife to her husband, but their interpretations would differ significantly: by

using the expression "your son" in (22), the communicator indicates that she thinks it significant that the culprit is the addressee's son and hence induces the hearer to derive implicatures along these lines. The wording of (21) does not give rise to such additional implicatures.

The difference here also has to do with the fact that the wording of an utterance can affect the context it will be processed in. In this case, the difference is not due to constraints on relevance imposed by the use of pragmatic connectives, but partly to differences in the contextual information associated with different concepts, and partly to a difference in processing cost: by choosing the composite expression "your son" rather than simply "Fred", the communicator makes the utterance more costly to process, and if it is mutually manifest that she could have simply said "Fred", it would be equally manifest that this choice was intentional, and hence that she intended to convey additional implicatures to compensate for the increase in processing effort. As we shall see in chapter 6, there are many subtle ways in which communicators can exploit linguistic means to achieve special contextual effects apart from the propositional form of an utterance.

So one point we want to note here is that since the linguistic form of an utterance can influence its contextual effects, identity in propositional form between two utterances is not a sufficient condition for identity in their interpretations.

One further significant matter we need to discuss concerns the context relative to which interpretive resemblance is to be established. Consider the following example:

(23) *Original utterance*
Mary: The back door is open.

(24) *Original context*
(a) If the back door is open, thieves can get in.
(b) We don't want thieves to get in.

(25) *Intended implicature*
We need to close the back door.

Suppose I did not understand what Mary said, and so I ask you what she said. Two possible answers would be the following:

(26) *Report 1*
The back door is open.

(27) *Report 2*
We should close the back door.

Now if I have access to the original context (24), either report will convey to me what Mary meant, hence both will resemble the original in its originally intended interpretation.

But suppose that my context differs from the original context:

(28) *New Context*
(a) If the children are coming home from school, the back door must be open.
(b) The children are coming home from school.

If I interpret report 1 in this new context, the analytic implications will be the same as that of the original, but the contextual implication will be very different:

(29) The back door should be open.

By contrast, if I process report 2 in the new context, it will yield an interpretation quite similar to that of the original: it will convey both that the back door is open and also that it should be closed.

However, the definition of interpretive resemblance between propositional forms does not allow us to capture this difference because it defines interpretive resemblance only with regard to the *same* context:

> "... two propositional forms P and Q ... *interpretively resemble* one another in a context C to the extent that they share their analytic and contextual implications in the context C." (Wilson and Sperber 1988a, p. 138; p. 57 above)

But if report and original are interpreted in the same context, whether that context is the original one or the new, then both report 1 and report 2 will be found to resemble the original closely - cases where report and original are processed in different contexts and can therefore lead to different interpretrations are not addressed by the definition. Thus the definition does not reveal that if the reports are processed in the new context, then report 2 actually resembles the original (as interpreted in the original context) more closely than report 1 does.

To take care of such situations, which are common when utterances are used to represent other utterances, it seems that what one has to compare are the assumptions communicated by each utterance in its own context rather than in the same context.

In summary, then, we can say that two utterances interpretively resemble one another to the degree that the

sets of assumptions which each conveys in its own cognitive environment overlap, that is, interpretive resemblance between utterances depends on the degree to which they share their explicatures and/or implicatures.

Chapter 3

"Covert translation"

It is claimed at times in the literature that a good translation should read not read like a translation at all, but like a target language original. Usually this merely expresses the requirement that in terms of style, or naturalness of expression, a translation should be indistinguishable from a receptor language original. However, at times this claim reflects the idea that there can be instances of translation where it is not necessary for the translated text to be recognized as being a translation. In this chapter I want to examine this particular view.

1 The notion of "covert translation"

House's (1981) model for translation quality assessment explicitly provides for such cases under the notion of "covert translation". She defines "covert translation" as "... a translation which enjoys or enjoyed the status of an original ST [=source text] in the target culture."(p. 194) She calls this type of translation "covert" because "... it is *not* marked pragmatically as a TT [=translated text] of an ST but may, conceivably, have been created in its own right" (1981, p. 194, emphasis as in original).[1] Furthermore, covert translations "... have direct target

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1 Here and in the subsequent discussion I am concerned with House's particular theory of "functional equivalence"; therefore the remarks and comments made about it do not necessarily apply to other approaches using the term "functional equivalence".

language addressees, for whom this TT is as immediately and 'originally' relevant as ST is for the source language addressees" (p. 195).

House adopts a "functional equivalence" approach to translation, that is, the basic principle of translation is that the translation should match the original text in function, where 'function' is to be understood as "... the application (cf. Lyons, 1969:434) or use which the text has in the particular context of a situation" (1981, p. 37). Now in that framework the notion of "covert translation" occupies a special place because "covert translations" are in fact the only ones capable of actually achieving the main goal of the theory, that is, "functional equivalence":

> "... it is only in cases of covert translations that it is in fact possible to achieve functional equivalence." (p. 204)

By way of contrast, the other major type of translation, called "overt translation", necessarily falls short of this goal:

> "In the case of overt translations, the achievement of strict functional equivalence is, in fact, impossible; a second level function must then be aimed at in translation." (p. 205)

Thus the notion of "covert translation" embodies the ideal case of this translation theory: the achievement of functional equivalence.

However, even though "covert translation" is the only type that can actually achieve functional equivalence, this does not necessarily mean that it can do so easily, because of differences in the sociocultural backgrounds of the source and target language audiences:

> "This functional equivalence is, however, difficult to achieve because differences of the socio-cultural norms have to be taken into account". (p. 204f)

Thus the translator has to be careful "... to take different cultural presuppositions in the two language communities into account" (p. 196).

House points out some of these difficulties when evaluating an English translation of a German tourist booklet. It is treated as an instance of "covert translation" since a tourist brochure is immediately relevant to the target audience.

The booklet is entitled "Nürnberg", and provides information about the attractions of Nuremberg for tourists. For our discussion two passages are relevant. The first involves a reference to the age of the mastersingers: while the German speaks about "... die Zeit des Meistergesanges, die Zeit des Schuhmachers und Meistersingers Hans Sachs" [... the time of mastersinging, the time of the shoe-maker and mastersinger Hans Sachs] (p. 297; gloss my own), the English has "... the age of the mastersingers and *their best-known representative*, the shoe-maker Hans Sachs." (p. 301; emphasis my own) In the second passage, the German talks about "das Maennleinlaufen und der Englische Gruss" (p. 298), while the English rendering has "*the moving figures on the ancient mechanical* 'Maennleinlaufen' *clock and the artistic skill of the carved Annunciation, the famous* 'Engelsgruss'" (p. 302; emphasis my own). As can be seen, the italicised words do not have overt counterparts in the German original.

When comparing translation and original, she finds that in the passages quoted there is a difference along the

functional parameter of "social role relationship": in House's perception, by leaving the italicized information implicit, the German brochure had a special effect on the audience: it treated them as people cultured enough to know who Hans Sachs was and what 'Männleinlaufen' and the 'Englische Gruss' referred to, and hence flattered them. By making this information explicit, the English translation is felt to lose this effect:

> "... TT [=translation text] fails to flatter the addressees ... because the assumption of the addressee's knowledge of facts about Nürnberg has not been upheld in TT." (p. 123)

Yet in her evaluation, she does not treat these differences as errors, but as adaptations required by the different sociocultural background of the target audience:

> "These two mismatches are examples of the case where a reference in ST to the particular cultural heritage of the source language community needs to be explained to the TT addressees, for whom this culture is alien. Therefore, these mismatches cannot be classed among covertly erroneous errors but must be regarded as changes necessitated by the differences in cultural background between the two language communities ..." (pp. 123f)

One may disagree with House's view that the absence of the explanations in the German version flatters the average German reader of that brochure and that this effect was deliberate - one wonders if anybody analysing the German text without comparing it to any other version would have felt any flattery at these points at all. However, this is not our concern here, and so, for the sake of argument, we shall assume that the author's perception of flattery in these two places is justified. Let us also agree with her judgment that the addition of information

at these points in the English was necessary.[2]

However, granting these points - could one not have expected a translator aiming at functional equivalence to have preserved the flattering effect in some other way - perhaps by building flattery into some other part of the translated text where the socio-cultural differences would not interfere? Or if that seemed impossible in the existing text, should he not perhaps have *added* a sentence or two - not for its informational value, but to achieve "functional equivalence" in this flattering effect? After all, the purpose of the booklet is that of "attracting tourists to Nürnberg" with a "good measure of exaggeration and pretension" (p. 118), and if part of the strategy of the original involved flattering the tourist, then surely this must be very important for the translation, too.

In fact, it is one of House's more serious criticisms of the English version that it fails generally in these areas of "exaggeration and pretension": failures of the English version to "... use intensifiers, figurative language and cohesion devices ... weaken the interpersonal functional component", that is "... the attempt to induce addressees to come and see Nürnberg by describing its characteristics in an impressive, pleasing and attractive manner" (p. 128).

But this raises two further questions. Firstly, how can the translator know whether or not his translation of the

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2 One could, in fact, argue that the explication of this information was unnecessary: English readers could have felt even *more* flattered than Germans by being treated as knowledgeable of details of German history and culture.

original is "functionally equivalent", for example in its flattering effects? Does he do so by checking whether his translation flatters the receptor language audience in corresponding parts of the texts, or by making sure that the number of instances of flattery that occur is equal between original and translation, or by some comparison of the cumulative flattering effect of the whole text? As it stands, House's model provides no answers to these evaluative questions (cf. our discussion in ch. 1, section 2.3.2.2).

Secondly, what if "exaggeration and pretension" are not socially acceptable in the target culture? It seems possible that the author of the English version might want to tone down the exaggeration and flattery of the original deliberately - perhaps on the assumption that they might be counter-productive in view of the socio-cultural background of the target audience. House does recognize the potential importance of "... differences in values and habits, in understating or emphasizing certain emotions etc.", even between closely related cultures (p. 198). But she cautions that "... given the goal of achieving functional equivalence in a covert translation, assumptions of cultural difference should be carefully examined before any change in ST [=source text] is undertaken" (p. 198). In other words: the translator is to follow the original unless there is a reason to depart from it, and comparison with the original is the ultimate measure of the quality of the receptor language text.

While this is a reasonable guideline, it leaves unanswered a rather basic problem - and that is, that the preservation of a function does not, in fact, make the translation "functionally equivalent": for example, maintaining the function of flattery can make the translation non-equivalent with regard to other functions.

This problem is serious from a theoretical point of view because it suggests that equivalence of function is not, in fact, an adequate criterion for adequacy in translation - a point that has been brought against "functional equivalence" by Reiss and Vermeer (1984).

Consider another tourist-brochure example that illustrates these points still more clearly. This time the texts are taken from a brochure provided for passengers on board the Finnjet car ferry operating between Travemünde and Helsinki. Side-by-side on one page it has two write-ups that give information about the ferry, with all its technical advantages, and the route.[3]

1. Der schönste Weg nach Finnland	<u>Finnjet - suomalaisten suora tie Loma-Europpaan</u>
[*The most beautiful way to Finland*]	[*Finnjet - the straight way for Finns to holiday-Europe*]
2. Wir laden Sie ein, mit uns auf der Finnjet - einem der grössten Passagierschiffe der Welt -	Finnjet on yksi maailman suurimpia matkustalaivoja.

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3 Key to the form of presentation: I have tried to line up the two texts in the following way: text parts that take up corresponding positions are placed side by side; where the corresponding parts differ significantly in information content, the differences have been underlined in the Finnish; information altogether absent from one version is indicated by blank lines in the respective column. For easier reference, I have numbered the blocks of text in the German column. An English key is provided in square brackets after each sentence.

nach Finland zu kommen!	[*The Finnjet is one of the world's largest passenger ships*]
[*We invite you to come with us to Finland aboard the Finnjet - one of the world's largest passenger ships!*]	
3. Trotz der mächtigen Grösse ist die Finnjet ein aussergewöhnlich "spritziges" Schiff!	Mahtavasta koostaan huolimatta Finnjet on kuitenkin hämmästyttävän nopea, ...
[*Despite its huge size, the Finnjet is an extraordinarily "lively" ship.*]	[*Despite its huge size, the Finnjet is surprisingly fast, ...*]
4. Denn die Finnjet wird als einziges Passagierschiff der Welt von Gasturbinen angetrieben - wie ein Düsenflugzeug.	
[*For the Finnjet is the world's only passenger ship that is driven by turbine engines - like a jet plane.*]	
5. In nur 3 Minuten kommt dieser Wellen-Riese mit Hilfe seiner Gasturbinen auf die Spitzengeschwindigkeit von 30,5 Knoten, das sind etwa 56 Stundenkilometer!	... sillä jo 3 minuutissa se saavuttaa kaasuturpiiniensa ansiosta 30,5 solmun huippunopeuden, toisin sanoen 56 kilometriä tunnissa!

[*With the help of its jets this wave-giant gains the top-speed of 30,5 knots, that is about 56 kilometers per hour, in just 3 minutes!*]

[*... for with the help of its jets it reaches the top speed of 30,5 knots, in other words of 56 kilometres per hour, in just 3 minutes!*]

6. Eine kaum vorstellbare Leistung bei einem Schiff dieser Grössenordnung!

Tämän kokoisen jättiläisen kohdalla se tuntuu miltei uskomattomalta!

[*An achievement hardly imaginable for a ship of this size!*]

[*For a giant of this size this seems almost incredible!*]

7. Im Hochsommer erreicht die Finnjet von Travemünde aus in nur 22,5 Stunden den Hafen von Helsinki!

Keskikesällä Finnjet taittaakin Helsinki-Travemünde-välin peräti 22,5 tunnissa!

[*During the summer peak-season the Finnjet reaches the harbour of Helsinki from Travemünde in a mere 22,5 hours!*]

[*In the summer peak-season the Finnjet travels from Helsinki to Travemünde in only 22,5 hours.*]

8. Genauso beeindruckend wie die Kraft ist auch die technische Ausstattung der Finnjet. ...

Myös muilta teknisiltä ominaisuuksiltaan Finnjet edustaa huippuluokkaa: ...

[*Just as impressive as its power is also the technical equipment of the Finnjet ...*]

[*Also in its other technical qualities the Finnjet represents top class.*]

(The remainder of this fairly long paragraph is almost identical in content from sentence to sentence between the two versions. Quoted below are the last two paragraphs of both versions.)

9. Etwa eine halbe Stunde vor der Ankunft in ihrem Heimathafen passiert die Finnjet das Schärengebiet vor Helsinki.

[*About half an hour before arrival in its home port, the Finnjet passes through the archipelago outside Helsinki.*]

Myös satamaan saapumista on aina mukava seurata.

[*Also the arrival in the harbour is always nice to watch.*]

Idyllinen Travemünde rantabulevardeineen on kuin satukirjasta.

[*The idyllic Travemünde with its beach boulevards is like out of a fairy tale book.*]

10. Mindestens genauso spanned wie über Wasser wäre ein paar Minuten später das Anlegemanöver

Itse laituriin kiinnittyminen, (on) kuin taitavan kuljettajan auton pysäköinti

aus der "Fischperspektive".	jalkakäytävän viereen.
[*The docking manoeuvre from the "fish perspective" would be at least as exciting as from above water.*]	[*The docking to the quay itself is like a skilful driver parking his car by the pavement.*]
11. Mit Hilfe der zwei Schiffsschrauben am Heck, der beiden Querstrahlruder links und rechts und mit viel Fingerspitzengefühl wird die Finnjet sanft zu ihrem Terminal gebracht.	Kahden perässäolevan ja keulan molemminpuolisten potkureiden sekä erinomaisen sormenpäätuntuman avulla Finnjet tekee "pehmeän laskun" laituriin.
[*With the help of the two propellers at the stern, of the two lateral-thrust rudders left and right, and with great skill the Finnjet is taken softly to its terminal.*]	[*With the help of its two propellers at the stern and on both sides of the bow as well as with outstanding skill the Finnjet makes a "soft landing" at the quay.*]

What seems to relate these two texts to each other is the fact that a) they are placed side by side in this bilingual brochure, on a page that has a map at the top with the travelling route marked; b) the texts are quite parallel in their structure and c) they agree substantially in their information content - about 50 per cent of the text gives virtually the same information, mostly concerning the technical aspects.

On the other hand, there are very clear *differences* between them. Without going into great detail, the following examples may serve to illustrate this. The titles differ almost completely in content; the information contained in sentence 4 of the German version is missing from the Finnish one. Particularly interesting is a comparison of the last two paragraphs (sentences 9-11); both versions talk here about arrival at the destination - but the German one describes matters related to arriving in Helsinki, the Finnish gives a picturesque description of arrival in Travemünde.

The question is: how can we account for the relationship between these Finnish and German texts? What kind of theory would we need to account for the similarities and differences between the source language and receptor language texts? It seems a formidable task to formulate a general theory of translation with a concept of "faithfulness" or "equivalence" - such as one would expect to be at the heart of a theory *of* translation - that is coherent *and* can accommodate the kinds of changes just discussed.

2 Translation - when all is change?

An extreme case of translation along these lines is discussed by Hönig and Kußmaul (1984). It involves an advertisement by Viyella House in the Sunday Times that begins as follows:

> "WHAT'S IN A NAME?
>
> It sounds ordinary on paper. A white shirt with a blue check. In fact, if you asked men if they had a white shirt with a blue check, they'd say yes.
> But the shirt illustrated on the opposite page is an adventurous white and blue shirt. Yet it would

> fit beautifully in your wardrobe. And no one would accuse you of looking less than a gentleman. ..." (Cited in Hönig and Kußmaul 1984, p. 36)

Hönig and Kußmaul contrast two different specifications for a translation of this advertisement: one asks for a translation to be used in a study of the marketing strategy of Viyella House, the original company; the other asks for a corresponding advertisement to be used in Germany. While the first requires preservation of the content of the original, the second requires preservation of its intention.

With regard to the second specification, the authors point out that the aim of preserving the intention of the original could result in a German version in which possibly "not a single word would be reminiscent of the 'original'" (1984, p. 40); in fact, they concede, the German version might not talk about a shirt at all but perhaps centre around an item of children's wear. While admitting that both theoreticians and practitioners might prefer to use a term other than 'translation' for the second case, the authors maintain that such cases do fall under translation: [4]

> "We are of the opinion that we are dealing here with two equally valid basic types of translation ... These two basic types can be designated as "functional constancy" ["Funktionskonstanz"] and "functional change" ["Funktionsveränderung"]. They are completely equally valid and equally legitimate strategies of translation between which the translator has to choose for every text. It is therefore by no means true that *functional constancy* can be taken to be the normal case of translation, whereas

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4 Snell and Crampton (1983), for example, belong to those who are doubtful that advertising should be dealt with by translation: "Translation has little to do with this fascinating area of communication" (p. 112)

> *functional change* is the exotic exception." (1984, p. 40; translation my own)

Thus Hönig and Kußmaul propose a theory of translation that does not rely on text functions as factors that have to be kept constant in translation, but considers them as variables, too.

What, then, if anything, differentiates translation from other forms of communication? The answer the authors give is ambivalent. Its first part seems to be at variance with the idea of function-changing translation in that it suggests that the crucial point about translations is that both their contents and function are not determined by the translator's intentions:

> "Translational communication differs from other forms of written communication essentially in that neither the contents nor the function of the text originate in the sender's and text designer's, i.e. the translator's, individual desire to communicate." (1984, p. 13; translation my own)

Where, then, do the contents and functions of translated texts come from? The most obvious answer would seem to be that typically they are derived from the original. Yet this seems to be denied by the very next sentence which again affirms that the communicative functions of the original are not constant factors, but variables that depend on the "purpose of the communication":

> "In this way all communicative functions - from the function of the text to the function of the individual word - become variables, which need to be determined with regard to the respective purpose of communication." (1984, p. 13; translation my own)

It seems, then, that Hönig and Kußmaul have not really succeeded in clarifying what the essence of translation is, especially as regards the relationship between original and translation: if a translation can differ in vir-

tually all aspects from the original - what makes the translation a translation?[5]

However, before trying to clarify how the relationship between translation and original can be characterized it seems worth asking another preliminary question first, namely: what point is there in relating these target language texts to the originals at all?

3 Descriptive use in interlingual communication

Returning to the example of the tourist brochure on Nuremberg, one has to ask: what really is the point of comparisons based on "functional equivalence" between original and translation here? The Verkehrsverein Nürnberg, the publisher of the tourist booklet under discussion, is presumably much more interested in whether its English brochures are *as effective as possible* in attracting tourists than in how closely any of these brochures matches up in a point-by-point comparison with a corresponding German brochure in terms of some translation-theoretic notion like "functional equivalence".

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5 In their summary of the "strategy" of translation which they suggest, the authors state that the translator "... takes note of the source language text, and relates it to his situation as translator. He specifies the translation task and determines the communicative function of the target language text, orienting himself toward the pragmatic expectations of his addressees" (1984, p. 58; translation my own). All this makes sense; the only problem is that, as in other strategy-oriented approaches, these authors, too, content themselves with proposing these various strategic steps and illustrating them from examples - without spelling out explicitly the criteria involved in the various specification, determination and derivation processes. Thus what actually takes place in these steps is largely left implicit.

The same seems true from the receptors' point of view: what they are looking for in the brochure is not "functional equivalence" with a corresponding German version; in fact, it would be immaterial to them whether there were a corresponding version in German at all. All that would matter to them is that they are given information *relevant to them* and their plans.

For the Finnish-German example, too, the same point can be made: the existence of a similar piece of writing in the other language is irrelevant to the communication act.

The example from Hönig and Kußmaul is perhaps the most informative here because, as mentioned above, the authors explicitly consider two different ways of translating the advertisement. A closer look will help us to see that these two options differ in rather fundamental respects. Hönig and Kußmaul formulate the specifications for the options as follows:

> "'The Viyella House company now want to sell their products also in Germany. Make a translation which shows what marketing strategy they use in England. Perhaps you will want to add a few lines as well.'
>
> Or: 'The Viyella House company has sent us this advertisement; we should put together something corresponding to it. So get together with one of our advertising experts, translate the advertisement for him and then work with him to draft a good advertisement for our area.'" (1984, p. 39; translation my own)

As I tried to show above, in the second case the original advertisement in English has little bearing on the German version: the German target audience need not even be aware of its existence, and the success of the German version would not be measured in terms of its resemblance

to the original. As the authors themselves state, there need not be any resemblance at all between the original and the German advertisement. In fact, the English advertisement could well turn out to be a distraction: the differences in socio-cultural background might be such that it would be better to design a new advertisement altogether. So the German advertisers might set the English advertisement aside and came up with a completely different advertisement, and, crucially for our discussion, there would be nothing wrong with this: all that mattered would be whether the advertisement managed to boost the sales of Viyella House articles.

The first specification, however, is clearly different: here the existence of the English original is crucial to the translation task - the request could not be fulfilled if there were no English original to translate and the point of the translation is to bring out part of the content of that English original, and to draw further inferences from it about the marketing strategy underlying it.

In summary, then, we can make the following observation: in the first two examples - the tourist brochure on Nuremberg and the write-up on the "Finnjet" - and in the case of the second specification given for translating the Viyella House advertisement, there is no *necessary* relationship between the source language and the target language texts. In fact, in each case the existence of the source language original was incidental to the communication act: the brochure on Nuremberg, the article about the Finnjet ferry, and the German advertisement for Viyella House could all have been composed without reference or resort to the source language "originals", and the communication act could still have succeeded.

In the first case given in example three, however, the translation was crucially dependent on the source language original, and this seems to be the case in most translations: for example, an English translation of Goethe's "Faust" or a German translation of Shakespeare's "As you like it" is crucially dependent on the existence and content of the original works; their whole point is to represent those original works, and their success depends on the degree to which they achieve this. One could, of course, compose receptor language originals that had virtually the same information content as the source language texts, or used the same style, tried to achieve similar effects and so forth. However, they would be read and interpreted very differently depending on whether they were presented as works in their own right or as representations of those famous source language originals.

In relevance theory this difference is accounted for in terms of the distinction between descriptive and interpretive use. As pointed out in chapter 2 above (section 4.1), relevance theory claims that this distinction is rooted in human psychology: human beings have two different ways of entertaining thoughts - they can entertain them descriptively, in virtue of their being true of some state of affairs, and they can entertain them interpretively, in virtue of the interpretive resemblance they bear to some other thoughts, and this difference makes itself felt in communication as well.

In fact, the examples just considered seem to have in common that they all constitute instances of descriptive rather than interpretive use: the receptor language texts are intended to achieve relevance in their own right, not as interpretations of some source language original.

But how, then, can we account for the similarities and differences between the source and receptor language texts?

Returning to our Finnish-German example, I do not have information on which of the two versions, if any, was the "original". However, for the sake of argument, let us assume that the Finnish version was produced first, then the German one - though both might have been produced interdependently. The intended effect of this part of the brochure was probably to impress travellers with the special technical equipment of the ferry and to arouse positive feelings about their destination.

Why should the accounts be so similar, for example in the technical parts? One plausible explanation is that to draft the Finnish version required a significant amount of effort for the communicator, such as the compilation of technical information, then relevance-based selection and then writing it up in a structured and coherent form. So when it came to making the German version, since this information was assumed to be equally relevant to the German target audience, it would probably have been much more convenient to start from the Finnish text rather than creating a totally new write-up from scratch.

At the same time, there would have been no a priori obligation to "faithfulness" to the Finnish version in content or structure in constructing the German one; as pointed out above, it is not even necessary to assume that there was a complete Finnish original text prior to the German one, though there may well have been. Most likely the advertising department of this shipping line would be more concerned about getting a German version that would be effective along the general lines spelled out above than about getting a "faithful" representation of the original.

Thus if the communicator responsible for the German version felt there was information of high relevance for the German audience that was not included in the Finnish "vorlage", or if he found a more effective way of presenting the same information to his German target audience, it would only be in the interest of the shipping agency if he went ahead and composed the German version accordingly. There would be no point in resisting such changes because they violated some translation-theoretic notion like "functional equivalence".

The differences in title might be a case in point: they may well reflect assumptions by the communicator about what is most relevant to the respective target audience: while the first concern of the typical Finnish traveller envisaged might be economy - hence appeal to the "most direct" route -, it might have been thought that the typical German traveller is more concerned about enjoying himself than about the economic aspect - hence the appeal to "the most beautiful way to Finland". In both cases the title chosen is the one thought most effective for the target audience, regardless of its relationship to some other language version.

Other, more trivial factors may have affected the composition process - such as considerations of space. Thus it seems possible that the Finnish original did have an equivalent to the fourth sentence of the German, but perhaps when it came to putting the brochure together, it might have turned out that the two texts did not fit in the space provided. Thus a decision would be required to shorten at least one of the texts, and the editor might have decided on cutting out this particular sentence in the Finnish version because, Finnjet being a Finnish enterprise, Finns would be more likely to know that this

ferry is jet-driven, especially since it got a fair bit of coverage in Finnish media when it was first taken into service. On the other hand, Germans would be much less likely to have any detailed knowledge about the Finnjet - and hence it would seem highly relevant to retain this information in the German version - imagine you could impress your friends after your holiday telling them that you went on a ship driven by jets, just like a jet-plane!

The similarity and difference between the two versions of section 9 could also be explained in terms of estimates of relevance: travelling information is generally more relevant to first-time travellers - hence more likely to be read by such. Information about their destination is usually more relevant to travellers than information about their point of origin; most German-speaking first-time travellers on the Finnjet would be going from Travemünde to Helsinki; hence it would be more relevant to them to include information about arriving in Helsinki than about departing from Travemünde, though Travemünde is what the assumed Finnish original talks about, for exactly the same general reasons.

Thus it seems possible to account for the differences and similarities between these texts on purely relevance-theoretic grounds, without resorting to translational concepts, such as equivalence or faithfulness, at all. The writer of the German text may have found the Finnish original helpful in his task, but the text he created was intended to communicate in its own right, and to be read and understood as such.

It may be worth pointing out that this distinction between descriptive and interpretive use applies not only to interlingual communication - parallel cases occur intralingually as well. For example, speaker A might pres-

ent a summary of how human beings communicate, and speaker B might present a summary of Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory of communication. The two presentations could be virtually identical in information content, but the first would be presented descriptively, that is, as a representation of what the speaker believed to be true of human communication, whereas speaker B would be communicating interpretively: that is, his presentation would be intended to achieve relevance as a representation of the views of Sperber and Wilson of communication.

This difference could have important consequences. In the first case, speaker A would be understood as presenting his own views, and hence as committed to their truth: if the speaker did not, in fact, believe these views for himself, he would be accused of untruthfulness, and he could not defend himself by saying that Sperber and Wilson believed this information to be true; that fact would be besides the point if he himself did not share their beliefs.

Speaker B, by contrast, would be expected to accurately represent the thinking of Sperber and Wilson. If the information he presented actually differed from the views held by Sperber and Wilson, he would be liable to the charge of misrepresentation, and he could not defend himself saying that he had presented these views because he believed them to be true: what mattered would be whether he had faithfully conveyed the position of Sperber and Wilson.

Thus again we see that the distinction between descriptive and interpretive use has important implications for successful communication.

Looking into the theory and practice of translation, it seems that this failure to distinguish between descrip-

tive and interpretive use has had unfortunate results for the understanding and accomplishment of interlingual communication.

On the theoretical side, it has landed scholars with the enormous task of trying to devise "... a theory of translation [that] will do justice to both Bible and bilingual cereal packet" (Kelly 1979, p. 226).

On the practical side it has been unhelpful, too. An interesting example here is the massive "translation task" that arose in the process of "Vietnamization", described by Brislin (1976): at that time the Vietnamese people were to take over jobs from the Americans; many of these jobs involved the handling of advanced technology. Brislin writes:

> "Training people to handle such equipment may seem straight-forward enough, but it is easy to forget that tremendous numbers of technical documents, both for instruction in and maintenance of this equipment, must accompany any transfer from one group of operators and maintenance specialists to another." (1976, p. 12)

Now this example is interesting for a number of reasons; firstly, it illustrates the fact that the transfer of information from one language to another is almost automatically seen as a task that calls for translation. There is no indication in Brislin (1976) that any other alternative was considered.

Secondly, this example shows how influential thinking along translational lines can be, colouring even the objective of the enterprise and its evaluation; thus when discussing what criterion should be used to evaluate the translations produced for this task, Brislin writes:

> "In operational terms, the criterion meant that people using the translated materials should be

> able to maintain the equipment as well as people using the material in its original language form" (1976, p. 14f).

Consequently one kind of testing applied to these translations was "performance testing", conceived of as "... a way of measuring the quality of technical translations by having readers perform a task using the translations" (1976, p. 16). Note how the result is described:

> "The best translation into Vietnamese resulted in performance on a very difficult, multistep task at a level that was approximately equal to that of United States Army technicians who used the English manual (...). Error-free performance was observed for 73 percent of the tasks done by each group, United States Army and Vietnamese Air Force" (1976, p. 17).

What is significant here is the fact that the evaluation is done in terms of "equivalence" in performance between source language speakers and receptor language speakers - rather than, for example, in terms of *adequacy* of performance. In other words, instead of asking "Is the performance of Vietnamese using the translation *equivalent* to the performance of the United States Army personnel?", one could have asked: "Is the performance of Vietnamese technicians using the translation *adequate* for the job?" After all, for the overall purpose of the exercise of "Vietnamisation", the main concern would be that the Vietnamese people should be able to handle the equipment *properly*, rather than "as well as group X of individuals".

Note that this is not a purely academic point: suppose, for example, that the "translated" manuals had actually been evaluated in terms of adequacy; suppose further, that the quality of an instruction manual is considered "good" if it enables technicians using the manual to carry out the operations described error-free to a degree

of 85 percent. In that case, the manuals that allowed 73 percent error-free performance would not have been considered good, but would have been seen as needing further improvement. And the improvement needed may not have been obvious in terms of translation; it might well have been that due to differences in technical and cultural background the improvements may have led to Vietnamese versions that differed considerably from the English originals.

Snell and Crampton (1983), for example, seem to be aware of the fact that foreign language versions of instructional material need to be evaluated in terms of their own adequacy rather than by comparison with the original text. Thus they recommend that the translator should be "extremely thorough" in checking his translation, and when doing so, "... he should work through the instructions *with* the apparatus, and forgetting that he has ever read the original, *make quite sure* that his finished work describes the function" (p. 113). The suggestion to "forget" the original in the testing process is a clear indication that the ultimate measure for such text material is its adequacy for the job rather than faithful representation of the original as such.[6]

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6 Two further comments seem to be in order. Firstly, it seems that testing would be more effective if it was done with typical members of the target audience: it would be difficult for the translator to really "forget" all his knowledge about the product, and if his educational standard is higher than that of the average reader, his ability to follow the instructions may not indicate that his target audience could do the same. Secondly, it is interesting that Snell and Crampton (1983) point out the need that the translator may have to educate his clients about the necessity of such practical testing:

> "Clients may regard your insistence as rather a nuisance, but if they have any understanding of your job they will respect you for your stand. If they had no appreciation of the point of view of a translator beforehand, you will have helped to edu-

But why then are such cases of communication commonly considered instances of translation?[7] I think there are several reasons. One is that there is a tendency to use the word "translation" rather loosely to refer to almost any instance of communication that involves the transfer of information from one language to another with the help of a bilingual person.

More importantly, as I pointed out with regard to the Finnjet tourist brochure, it is in some ways very convenient to actually translate an already existing piece of source language literature rather than to work out a new receptor language text, even if all that matters is that the receptor language text achieves successful communication in its own right.

This is clearly present in the case of the "Vietnamisation" example just considered; it was obviously more efficient to start from the existing English language manuals than to draft new ones in Vietnamese from scratch. So from this perspective translation seemed to be the most economical approach to take, especially in the hope that at least part of the job could be taken over by computers. However, as I tried to point out above, problems can arise when the communicator does not clearly recognize that the role of the source language text is merely that of a convenient help for composing a receptor language text, not of a model to be reproduced faithfully. If this is not clear, the objective of the

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cate them in the ways of the profession." (p. 113)

7 Though excepting advertising from the domain of translation, Snell and Crampton (1983) do not indicate such reservations towards the translation of either "publicity and sales literature" or "instructional material".

communication act can be obscured, and hence its achievement in endangered.

A third reason seems to be that in cross-language situations where cultural differences are minimal, translation can go a long way toward achieving successful communication in the receptor language. But the more relevant the socio-cultural differences are to the communication act, the less successful translation will turn out to be.

Another negative effect of the failure to distinguish instances of interlingual communication involving descriptive use from those involving interpretive use is that the results which interlingual descriptive use can achieve have been put forward as challenges to translators actually engaged in interpretive interlingual use.

Consider the following quotes from Wonderly (1968) and Nida and Taber (1969):

> "... a handbook on automobile maintenance written for the mechanic may use the normal technical language of the trade; but if the same information were to be adequately translated into language suitable for a history professor, many technical concepts would have to be expressed by descriptive phrases and explanatory sentences, and the resulting material would be much longer." (Wonderly 1968, p. 40)
>
> "One specialist in translating and interpreting for the aviation industry commented that in his work he did not dare to employ the principles often followed by translators of the Bible: 'With us,' he said, 'complete intelligibility is a matter of life and death.' Unfortunately, translators of religious materials have sometimes not been prompted by the same feeling of urgency to make sense." (Nida and Taber 1969, p. 1)

Both passages are presented to Bible translators in order to give them a better idea of the nature of their task - to achieve good translations. What is not pointed out is

that their tasks are quite different in nature: while the writer of the receptor language manual is free to make whatever changes will enable the target audience to carry out their technical tasks better, even if this leads to changes of content, the Bible translator is bound to the contents of a unique original, the Bible. On analogy to the writer of a technical manual, the biblical translator could, of course, see his primary task as influencing the thinking and behaviour of the receptors in the most effective way; and he could therefore feel free to add to, delete from and generally change the contents of the biblical texts to that end. However, it would be doubtful whether these would or even should be considered translations of the biblical texts.

One rather important question that remains is: what is the role of the translator or interpreter in such instances of interlingual descriptive use - certainly a matter of interest to all those engaged in interlingual communication.

It is useful to distinguish two different situations here. One is the case where the original communicator himself is trying to address the receptor language audience. The tourist brochure examples looked at above would be a case in point, and so would be those of the manufacturer concerned to provide technical manuals in a foreign language for the use of his products abroad: in both cases the source language agent can be seen as trying to communicate relevant information to the receptor language audience.

In these kinds of situation the translator or interpreter clearly does have a vital function. However, this function is not an independent one, but can be seen as part of a *complex process of stimulus production*: the obvious

handicap of the source language communicator is that he does not master the receptor language, and so he needs the assistance of a bilingual individual for producing a receptor language stimulus that will accomplish his communication objectives.

While we tend to think of communication in terms of a single, individual communicator, it is not difficult to see that there are many instances even of intralingual communication which are much more complex than that.

An obvious example is printed publication: here the process of stimulus production is very complex indeed - beginning with the writing of the first pages of the manuscript, through revisions, through a process of editing, through typesetting up to the final printed product. There are a number of different individuals involved in this process: the writer himself, the editor and the printer - though in many situations there will be more: the editor might be aided by reviewers, there would be typesetters, and there may be artists, all cooperating with the original author to produce the stimulus - article, pamphlet, book - that will serve his desire to communicate.

Another case might be the production of advertisements: here one might well know from the beginning what kind of effects one wants to achieve - but it might take a group of specialists from marketing and the advertising industry to produce the intended stimulus, and the stimulus may not necessarily involve a single medium, like printing, but may take the form of a multi-media show. In all these cases the process of stimulus production is complex because the original communicator himself does not possess all the know-how, skills and equipment necessary to produce the stimulus he wants.

Viewed in this light, then, the case of interlingual descriptive communication considered here seems quite parallel: the original communicator lacks a certain skill necessary for producing the desired stimulus, that is, mastery of the receptor language code, and so he employs the help of a suitable person who has this skill - the interpreter or translator.

One might say that in such situations the presumption of relevance is shared between two individuals: the source language communicator bears responsibility that the set of assumptions he intends to make manifest to the addressee is "... relevant enough to make it worth the addressee's while to process the ostensive stimulus" (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 158). The translator's or interpreter's task is to ensure that the receptor language text he comes up with "is the most relevant [ostensive stimulus] the communicator could have used to communicate {I}" (1986a, p. 158).

The source language communicator may, of course, need more help than just with "transcoding"; he may, in fact, want to use some of the translator's or interpreter's knowledge of the receptor language culture to ensure that what he intends to communicate will be relevant to the receptor language audience, and in this way the bilingual agent can have an influence even on the objective of the communication act.

It is encouraging to see that - at least some parts of - the professional world of "translation" today seem to sense that this kind of interlingual communication service is different from "translation", as the following advertisement seems to suggest:

> "Weidner translates words into business. Consultancy-based approach. We will consult you, both before and during the translation process. Our close involvement with your project enables us to identify with and understand your corporate objectives. This appreciation of the background to and the aims of each assignment is the key to providing a translation which achieves the impact you are seeking in the target market." [8]

Crucially, the advertisement goes on to say:

> "*More* than a translation service. ... Your translation requirement needs to be managed like any other aspect of your business; it has to dovetail into your overall marketing and publishing plans. We understand your environment and we offer *very much more than a translation service.*" (ibid., emphases my own)

In other cases the bilingual may be a communicator in his own right, not tied to any source language agent at all. Thus carrying the Viyella House example (cf. p. 87 above) a bit further, the German agency asked to develop a German advertisement on the basis of the English one may be given a free hand by the parent company as to what exactly they produce; it might be left up to the German branch of the company to evaluate the advertisement in terms of its likely effectiveness. In that case the sole function of the original might have been to stimulate the thinking of the receptor language communicator.

In summary, I have tried to show in this chapter that there are instances of interlingual communication that have often been referred to as "translation" and that translation theorists have tried to account for, but that differ from other instances of translation in that the

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8 Advertisement on back cover of *Language Monthly*, no. 47, August 1987

source language original is incidental rather than crucial to the communication act. I have tried to argue that in relevance theory these instances of interlingual communication can be accounted for in terms of descriptive use. If this is correct, then there will be no need for a general theory of translation to concern itself with such cases.

Chapter 4

Translating the meaning of the original

If one were to ask around what people think a translation should achieve, a very common answer would probably be that it should communicate the meaning of the original accurately and clearly to the readers of the translation. This has not always been so - thus certain philological traditions have tended to stress the preservation of stylistic and other linguistic characteristics of the original[1] - but since the nineteen sixties, there has been a strong trend in translation theory and practice to pay special attention to how well the translation communicates to the RL audience.[2] This concern for the adequacy of a translation in terms of its impact on the receptor language audience has found its fullest development in circles concerned with the translation of the Bible, though it is not limited to this enterprise, as, for example, Larson (1984) shows.[3]

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1 Cf. e.g. the position of Longfellow: "The business of a translator is to report what the author says, not to explain what he means; that is the work of the commentator. What an author says and how he says it, that is the problem of the translator." (Quoted in De Sua 1964.) Cf. also Arnold 1861.

2 Newmark (1988) links this trend to the rise of "modern linguistics": "Since the rise of modern linguistics ..., and anticipated by Tytler in 1790, Larbaud, Belloc, Knox and Rieu, the general emphasis, supported by communication-theorists as well as by non-literary translators, has been placed on the *reader* - on informing the reader effectively and appropriately, notably in Nida, Firth, Koller and the Leipzig School." (1988, p. 38)

3 Wilss (1982, p. 148f) includes Kade (1968b) among the communicative approaches; however, Kade seems to differ from the approaches considered here in presenting equivalence in semantic content as the primary concern.

1 Conveying the "message" of the original

The first approach along these lines that developed into a comprehensive theory is probably that of "dynamic equivalence" developed by Nida (1964; Nida and Taber 1969). It derives its name from the fact that its primary concern is "... with the dynamic relationship (...), that the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original and the message." (Nida 1964, p. 159) In the more fully developed version contained in Nida and Taber (1969), the authors introduce their approach in the following terms:

> "The older focus in translating was the form of the message, and translators took particular delight in being able to reproduce stylistic specialties, e.g., rhythms, rhymes, plays on words, chiasmus, parallelism, and unusual grammatical structures. The new focus, however, has shifted from the form of the message to the response of the receptor." (Nida and Taber, 1969, p. 1)

In line with this orientation, Nida and Taber define dynamic equivalence as follows:

> "Dynamic equivalence is therefore to be defined in terms of the degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language. This response can never be identical, for the cultural and historical settings are too different, but there should be a high degree of equivalence of response, or the translation will have failed to accomplish its purpose." (Nida and Taber 1969, p. 24)

One important aspect of "audience response" lies in correct understanding of the meaning:

> "Correctness must be determined by the extent to which the average reader for which a translation is

> intended will be likely to understand it correctly." (Nida and Taber 1969, p. 1)

Thus the main objective of translation is concerned with conveying the meaning of the original text:

> "Translating must aim primarily at 'reproducing the message'. To do anything else is essentially false to one's task as a translator." (Nida and Taber 1969, p. 12)

However, comprehension of the original message is not enough:

> "It would be wrong to think, however, that the response of the receptors in the second language is merely in terms of comprehension of the information, for communication is not merely informative. It must also be expressive and imperative if it is to serve the principal purposes of communications such as those found in the Bible. That is to say, a translation of the Bible must not only provide information which people can understand but must present the message in such a way that people can feel its relevance (the expressive element in communication) and can then respond to it in action (the imperative function)." (Nida and Taber 1969, p. 24)

The "idiomatic translation" approach developed by Beekman and Callow (1974) is also concerned with Bible translation. It resembles the "dynamic equivalence" approach in its rejection of form-oriented translation, and its emphasis that a translation should convey the meaning of the original. It also demands that the translation should be faithful to the "dynamics" of the original, but it looks at these dynamics in terms of "naturalness" of language use and ease of comprehension rather than receptor response:

> "A translation which transfers the meaning and the dynamics of the original text is to be regarded as a faithful translation. The expression *transfers the meaning*, means that the translation conveys to the reader or hearer the information that the original conveyed to its readers or hearers. ... The

> expression, *the dynamics*, means that (1) the translation makes a natural use of the linguistic structures of the RL [= receptor language] and that (2) the recipients of the translation understand the message with ease." (p. 34, italics as in original)

Larson (1984) presents an extension of the "idiomatic approach" to translation in general. In substance her model is very similar to that of Beekman and Callow (1974), though she does include the aspect of audience response in her definition of 'dynamics':

> "The underlying premise upon which this book is based is that the best translation is the one which a) uses the normal language forms of the receptor language, b) communicates, as much as possible, to the receptor language speakers the same meaning that was understood by the speakers of the source language language, and c) maintains the dynamics of the original source language text. Maintaining the 'dynamics' of the original source text means that the translation is presented in such a way that it will, hopefully, evoke the same response as the source text attempted to evoke." (p. 6)

Taking these approaches together, we can see that they share the following two basic objectives: 1) a translation must convey to the receptor language audience the meaning or message of the original, and 2) it must do so in a way that is faithful, viz. equivalent to the dynamics of the original - keeping in mind that there are differences in what is meant by "dynamics".

What do these objectives correspond to in terms of relevance theory? Before we can answer this question we need to ask what is meant by the "meaning" or "message" in these approaches. Nida and Taber define:

> "Message: the total meaning or content of a discourse; the concepts and feelings which the author intends the reader to understand and perceive." (1969, p. 205)

Beekman and Callow do not give a separate definition of 'meaning', but their definition of what it means to 'transfer the meaning' (see above) suggests that the 'meaning' of the original refers to "... the information that the original conveyed to its readers or hearers" (1974, p. 34).[4]

Larson (1984) does not give a distinct definition of her notion of 'meaning' either. At one point she identifies it with the "deep" or "semantic" structure of language, and for her this seems to correspond to information content. However, she also talks about "emotive meaning" - thus a communicator "may choose one form over another in order to give a certain *emotive meaning* in addition to the information he wishes to convey." (Larson 1984, p. 32; emphasis as in original) She states clearly that the meaning of the original is to be viewed as "the meaning intended by the original communicator" (1984, p. 17).

Expressed in terms of relevance theory, what these approaches suggest is the claim that a translation should convey to the receptor language audience the same interpretation (or at least a good approximation) as was intended (or conveyed) by the original author for the original audience - in other words, the contextual effects to be achieved by the translation should be (ideally) the same as those of the original with the original audience.

In the remainder of this chapter we shall examine whether this claim can provide the basis of an explicit general

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4 In a personal communication Callow told me that this statement should really have talked about meaning in terms of the information the author *intended* to convey rather than what was perhaps understood by the audience; however, in terms of our discussion, this point is not of importance.

theory of translation. Since our discussion will pay special attention to the approaches just mentioned, we shall follow their distinction between the "message" and the "dynamics" of the translation, considering each in turn.

While there are some disagreements between the various approaches about how these dynamics are to be viewed, there seems to be very close agreement on the need for the translation to convey the message intended by the original author, or, in our terms, the set of assumptions {I} he intended to convey. Therefore in our discussion we shall focus on this claim, though we shall also give some consideration to the question of the "dynamics".

To do this, we shall take the example of a biblical text, consider its - probable - intended original meaning and then examine the prospects of conveying this meaning to a contemporary English audience by translation.

The example I have chosen is the 2nd chapter of the Gospel of Matthew.[5] This chapter begins with a report of how some magi came to pay homage to Jesus as the new-born king of the Jews; this visit resulted in the flight of Joseph and his family to Egypt and the slaughter of infants in Bethlehem. The chapter ends with an account of how the fugitives returned from Egypt and came to live in Nazareth.

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5 There are a number of reasons for this choice: e.g. this chapter presents special challenges of interpretation - R.T. France refers to it as "a minefield littered with exegetical corpses" (1981, p. 233). It is also a chapter that seems to rely quite heavily on contextual assumptions peculiar to the religion and culture of the Jews; but perhaps most importantly, an excellent analysis of this chapter has been proposed by R.T. France (1981) who approaches the text clearly in terms of communication.

However, Matthew does not just report these events, but combines them with copious allusions to and quotations from the Old Testament, sometimes adapting the quotations in certain ways. This suggests that he intended to convey in this chapter something more than just a report of certain events - but *what* did he intend to communicate? Considering that this chapter is the only one that gives information about the first thirty or so years of Jesus' life - why did Matthew choose this particular combination of narration and quotations from the Old Testament?

Accordingly, with France we shall "... want to ask simply what the author is trying to get across by his selection of Old Testament texts in this chapter, how he goes about communicating his meaning ... and how far we may judge him to have been successful in communicating his thoughts to his putative readers." (1981, p. 233f)

The structure of this chapter is rather straightforward: it consists of four narrative sections each of which contains a quotation:

(1) (a) The visit of the magi (vv. 1-12); quote from Micah 5:1
(b) The escape to Egypt (vv. 13-15); quote from Hosea 11:1
(c) The slaughter of the children (vv. 16-18); quote from Jeremiah 31:15
(d) The return to Nazareth (vv. 19-23), with the quote "He shall be called a Nazarene" from an unidentified source.

After careful consideration not only of this particular selection of narrative material and quotes, but also of certain peculiarities in Matthew's use of his quotations,

France reconstructs the "message" of this chapter as follows:

> "Assuming that Matthew was writing for a Jewish Christian readership, ... I imagine that even the most uninstructed reader would have had no difficulty in grasping the apologetic point which governs the overall structure of the chapter, that Jesus' obscure Galilean background was not a cause for embarrassment, but rather the end-result of a series of divinely directed movements, beginning as orthodox belief demanded in Bethlehem, but culminating in Nazareth, and that for each stage of this process there was appropriate scriptural authority. The 'surface meaning' which we have postulated for the four formula-quotations would plainly convey this general, essentially apologetic, message." (France 1981, p. 249)

However, according to France, this "surface meaning" does not exhaust Matthew's communicative intentions:

> "... we have seen reason at each point to believe that Matthew had more in mind than the 'surface meaning'; that he had bonus points to offer to those whose acquaintance with the Old Testament enabled them to spot his 'deliberate mistakes' in Mic. 5:1 and his sophisticated creation of the Nazarene text from a minor theme of Old Testament prophecy, or to recollect the context of Jer. 31:15 and the original identity of the 'son' in Hos. 11:1." (1981, p. 250)

Here France assumes a "distinction between the 'surface meaning', which any reasonably intelligent reader might be expected to grasp, and what we may call a 'bonus' meaning accessible to those who are more 'sharp-eyed', or better instructed in Old Testament scripture, ..." (1981, p. 241).[6]

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6 One of the 'bonus points' offered by Matthew's deliberate mistakes is the following; where the original passage in Micah 5:1 speaks of the insignificance of Bethlehem as "the least" of the towns in Judah, Matthew changes it to its emphatic opposite *oudamoos elachistee* 'by no means the least'; in France's view, the effect of this alteration is "... to call attention to the dramatic

France's justification for this viewpoint is worth quoting in full:

> "I am sure that a distinction between surface meaning and a bonus meaning for the initiated or alert is realistic; any adult reader of children's classics, ... will be well aware that the surface meaning may be communicated to the great delight of the more naïve audience, while at the same time a whole world of more esoteric pleasure is in store for those who share the author's private adult viewpoint and erudition. It is a poor author who aims to communicate only with the lowest common denominator of his potential readership." (1981, p. 241)

France concludes:

> "More could be added, all of it admittedly speculative and inevitably subjective. For what any given reader will find in a chapter like Matthew 2 will vary with his exegetical background. What I want to suggest is that Matthew would not necessarily have found this regrettable, that he was deliberately composing a chapter rich in potential exegetical bonuses, so that the more fully a reader shared the religious traditions and scriptural erudition of the author, the more he was likely to derive from his reading, while at the same time there was a surface meaning sufficiently uncomplicated for even the most naïve reader to follow it." (France 1981, p. 241)

This view of the intended "message" of a text being layered, perhaps even open-ended, is quite consistent with relevance theory, and, as France has pointed out, agrees with our everyday use of language as well. The

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alteration in Bethlehem's role from the insignificant village of David to the birthplace of the great son of David" (1981, p. 242). He points out that a reader not well acquainted with the Old Testament text might miss this 'bonus point' because this change "... achieves its force precisely *as* an alteration: in itself it would cause no surprise" (1981, p. 242).

question we are interested in here, however, is: what does this mean for approaches to translation that are committed to conveying the author-intended meaning of the original to a receptor language audience?

Assuming that France's analysis is essentially right, it would only seem reasonable to expect that any translation that is committed to conveying the meaning intended by the original author should convey to the receptor language audience *at least* Matthew's 'surface meaning', that is, the meaning he intended to convey to all members of his original audience, and which constituted his main point in writing this section of his gospel.[7]

However, it seems safe to say that there are few, if any, English readers who would naturally derive this 'surface meaning' from an English translation of this chapter - not even from the "Good News Bible" translation, though this was produced on the principles of "dynamic equivalence". Though all regular English translations of this chapter include all the events as well as the quotations and allusions, they do not seem to convey Matthew's main point here. How can this be?

To understand this problem we need to look more closely at the nature of communication.

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7 At this point I am not interested in the particular interpretations that France arrives at in his study; I am using his example more in terms of its *general* approach and insights, rather than to endorse any particulars.

2 The problem of secondary communication situations

As pointed out in chapter 2, section 1 above, one of the central claims of relevance theory is that human communication works by inference: the audience infers from the stimulus what the communicator intends to convey. It follows that in verbal communication the derivation of the speaker-intended interpretation depends not only on correct decoding, but just as much on the use of the right, that is, speaker-intended, contextual information.

Thus the sentence "We are about to close", said to you by a shop assistant as you try to enter, would normally be taken to suggest that you should not come in. However, if that shop assistant were your friend whom you had come to take out that evening, it would more likely be intended to suggest to you that you should wait for her since she would be shortly with you. The meaning available from decoding would be the same in both instances - the difference in interpretation would be due to the difference in the contextual information used in the interpretation process.

It follows that for communication to be successful the text or utterance produced must be inferentially combined with the right, that is, speaker-envisaged, contextual assumptions. Let us call communication situations of this type "primary communication situations". However, it can happen - for various reasons - that in interpreting a text an audience may fail to use contextual assumptions intended by the communicator and perhaps uses others instead. Such situations we shall refer to as "secondary communication situations", and in most cases they will lead to misinterpretations. This follows as a matter of logic: except under special circumstances, the exchange of premises in an argument will lead to a change in its conclusions.

What kind of misinterpretations can arise in secondary communication situations? From what has just been said, the answer is: any aspect of interpretation that is dependent on context:

- context determines the disambiguation of linguistically ambiguous expressions: wrong contextual assumptions can lead to the choice of the wrong semantic representation of such expressions.

- context is usually needed to determine the propositional form of an utterance: again mismatches of context can lead to the derivation of a wrong propositional form.

- context is needed to determine whether a propositional form is intended as an explicature, or whether it serves only to convey implicatures. This plays an important role in the identification of literal versus loose or metaphorical talk. Thus the interpretation of the expression "I am dying of hunger" as either literal or metaphorical will depend on whether its propositional form is taken as an explicature or not. Since this depends on the contextual assumptions available, the use of inappropriate context can lead to misunderstandings.

- context is needed to derive the implicatures of an utterance. Use of the wrong context can lead to the derivation of implicatures not intended - or it can cause intended implicatures to be missed.

This list is suggestive rather than complete - but it is probably sufficient to show that secondary communication situations can give rise to a wide range of misinter-

pretations: ambiguities can be resolved the wrong way, metaphorical expressions can be taken literally, implicatures can be missed and so forth.

What is important at this point is the reason for these misinterpretations. In all the cases considered, they arise from a mismatch in context: a given utterance is interpreted against a context different from the one intended by the communicator.

There is a wide range of secondary communication situations: they begin with everyday misunderstandings that occur because the person addressed, for one reason or another, did not use the contextual assumptions envisaged by the communicator; they extend all the way to the problem of misinterpretations of historical documents or works of literature that originated in settings different from our own.

From all that has been said so far, it comes as no surprise that translation, too, can find itself in secondary communication situations, and where it does, it follows logically that misinterpretations may arise, just as they do in other situations of secondary communication.

In fact, this is the main reason why an English translation of the second chapter of Matthew is unlikely to communicate to the average English reader what was most likely an obvious 'surface meaning' for the original audience: if the audience for whom Matthew wrote was a Jewish-Christian audience, they would first of all have had a fair knowledge of the Old Testament, and secondly they would have had to grapple with the problem that Jesus had come to be known as "Jesus of Nazareth": how could a "Jesus of Nazareth" be the expected Messiah when it was common knowledge that the Messiah was to be born

in Bethlehem? That this question was in the air is evidenced, for example, in John 7:41f where the people questioned Jesus' messiahship on those very grounds, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"

To an audience plagued by this problem it must have been easy to infer what Matthew intended to convey by this section of the text: it shows clearly that Jesus was, in fact, born in Bethlehem and also that, as France pointed out, the fact that he came to live in Nazareth later on was not a coincidence either, but the result of a number of divinely guided events. In other words: for the original audience Matthew's main point here followed as a set of implicatures from the combination of this text with some highly accessible contextual assumptions.

By contrast, it is not surprising that contemporary English readers who may have little knowledge of the Old Testament and who would see no problem in the association of Jesus with Nazareth, would fail to get Matthew's main point here: lacking the right contextual assumptions they would fail to derive the right implicatures.

Perhaps it is worth pointing out that this problem is not peculiar to the translation of written documents from ancient times, as the following example given by Brislin (1978) illustrates:

> "At a meeting held recently in Japan, an American was discussing two alternative proposals with his colleagues, all of whom were native speakers of Japanese. The American was well schooled in the Japanese language and was, indeed, often called 'fluent' by those around him. At this meeting, proposal A was contrasted to proposal B, and a consensus was reached about future action, and the meeting then dismissed. Upon leaving the room the American commented, 'I think the group made a wise

> choice in accepting proposal A.' A Japanese colleague, however, noted, 'But proposal B was the group's choice.' The American continued: 'But I heard people say that proposal A was better.' The Japanese colleague concluded, 'Ah, you listened to the words but not to the pauses between the words.'" (p. 205)

In this instance communication was not only between contemporaries, but even face to face, and yet cross-cultural differences caused misunderstanding.

Having understood the nature of the problem, the next question for the translation theorist is what should or could be done about such losses in communication.

2.1 Secondary communication problems and "dynamic equivalence"

In the "dynamic equivalence" approach, there is a certain amount of ambivalence as to how problems arising from secondary communication should be handled.

Let us approach the matter first from the perspective of the overall objectives of "dynamic equivalence". As we have seen, this approach aims at the comprehension of the "message" of the original, and this "message" is defined as "... the total meaning or content of a discourse; the concepts and feelings which the author intends the reader to understand and perceive" (Nida and Taber 1969, p. 205). Given this, it certainly seems necessary for the translator to seek to overcome obstacles to comprehension arising from the differences in background knowledge between the old and the new audience, and one would expect the theory of "dynamic equivalence" to provide and spell out the measures needed to achieve this.

In terms of our example, one would expect the "dynamic equivalence" approach to provide the translator with ways and means of communicating those main points of Matthew 2 to the modern English reader. Since the problem was that modern readers lack the particular contextual assumptions necessary to arrive at those main points - which are, in turn, particular contextual implications - in principle the problem could be solved in two different ways: a) by supplying the contextual assumptions needed or b) perhaps by spelling out the contextual implications themselves. Thus the translator should be able to include in the translation either information about the problem of Jesus' association with Nazareth in the light of Jewish expectations about the Messiah, or he should be able to spell out the main point, perhaps in the following form at the end of the chapter:

"Thus we see that the fact that Jesus is called 'Jesus of Nazareth' is no reason to be embarrassed. Rather, as we have seen, God brought him there in a number of steps, each of which he himself directed, beginning, as our belief demands, in Bethlehem, and culminating in Nazareth."

However, though quite clearly demanded by the objective of "dynamic equivalence", these measures would not be acceptable on Nida and Taber's conception of translation which is a linguistic one:

> "linguistic translation: a translation in which only information which is linguistically implicit in the original is made explicit and in which all changes of form follow the rules of back transformation and transformation and of componential analysis; opposed to CULTURAL TRANSLATION. Only a linguistic translation can be considered FAITHFUL." (1969, p. 205; capital letters as in original)

Now contextual assumptions and implications are not a matter of linguistics, but of inferences that have to do

with people's beliefs - cultural, religious and so forth; consequently their explication is not warranted under the authors' view of "linguistic translation", as they assert clearly in the following passage:

> "It must be further emphasized that one is not free to make in the text any and all kinds of explanatory additions and/or expansions. There is a very definite limit as to what is proper translation in this difficult area: one may make explicit in the text only what is *linguistically* implicit in the immediate context of the problematic passage. This imposes a dual constraint: one may not simply add interesting cultural information which is not actually present in the meanings of the terms used in the passage, and one may not add information derived from other parts of the Bible, much less from extra-Biblical sources, such as tradition." (Nida and Taber 1969, p. 111)[8]

Both from the point of view of relevance theory and from common experience, it is difficult to see how such a notion of "linguistic translation" can as a matter of general principle aim at achieving "dynamic equivalence" in terms of conveying the message of the original, especially in view of the fact that the translation situations that Nida and Taber have in mind span wide cultural gaps.[9]

The reconciliation of the goal of "dynamic equivalence" with that of "linguistic translation" is even more dif-

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8 The reference to "information which is not actually present in the meanigs of the terms used in the passage" is based on a decompositional view of semantics where the meaning of a term is made up of its meaning components.
9 Nida and Taber do allow for the inclusion of explanatory notes, either in a glossary or on the page where the note is needed, but separate from the translated text (1969, p. 111). However, because of the extra-linguistic source of such information, under their definition of "linguistic translation" these measures must be considered supplementary to translation, not part of translation itself.

ficult when it comes to the dynamics themselves. Let me illustrate this with the opening chapter of Matthew's Gospel. Matthew begins his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus. In terms of his original intentions and his original audience this was no doubt very effective: assuming that one of the main objectives of writing this Gospel was to assure people that Jesus was the long-expected Messiah, one of the first requirements that the candidate would have to fulfil was to be of the right lineage: it was common knowledge that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David. The identity of the Messiah naturally was a burning issue in those days of oppression by the Roman government. In other words, as far as his contemporary audience was concerned, on the very first pages of his Gospel Matthew began to tackle a crucial point.

But what about our typical modern English reader? The fact that he was reading the Gospel of Matthew would indicate some interest in its contents, presumably because of Jesus, the central character of the book. Depending on what kind of religious education he may have had, he would perhaps have some biblical knowledge: let us say he has heard of outstanding characters like King David, or possibly Abraham. But almost certainly the majority of the other individuals listed in the genealogy would be unknown to him, and their names, take, for example, "Jehoshaphat", hard to read. Thus our reader would have to struggle through a long list of mostly unknown and difficult names - in terms of relevance theory, he would have to spend a lot of processing effort on the first sixteen verses of this chapter.

Despite this high processing effort, he would, find very little reward, in sharp contrast to Matthew's first century audience: our modern reader would almost certainly not be aware that Davidic lineage was important as a

prerequisite for Jesus to qualify as the Messiah - and even if he were aware of this, the question whether or not Jesus is that Messiah-figure expected by the Jews would probably not figure very largely in his mind. Nor would the relevance be likely to be increased by Matthew's explicit comment after the genealogy about the lineage consisting of three sets of fourteen ancestors.

In short, reading this text, our reader would most likely have great difficulty in arriving at an interpretation consistent with the Principle of Relevance. This contrasts sharply with the original communication act; there the background knowledge envisaged by Matthew would first of all have decreased the processing effort: many of the names in the genealogy would have been known to Matthew's Jewish Christian readers; secondly, and more importantly, the text would have had a rich pay-off in terms of contextual implications: the high relevance of the messianic expectations of the day and the readers' familiarity with (most of) the characters occurring in the genealogy would have enabled him to see many interesting implications in it; thus the mention of women in a genealogy, like Rahab, or the allusion to one of the dark spots in king David's life, addressed by the explicit statement that Solomon's mother had been someone else's wife, would all have provided food for thought.

It is difficult, in view of these discrepancies, to see how one can seriously uphold the idea that "dynamic equivalence" translation can achieve if not identity, at least "a high degree of equivalence of response" (Nida and Taber 1969, p. 24), as a general claim: it may be achievable in primary or near-primary communication situations, but it seems unrealistic for secondary communication situations with significant differences in cog-

nitive environment, such as are usually encountered when translating biblical texts for present day readers.[10]

At the same time, it must be recognized that "dynamic equivalence" translations do tend to be more easily understood than "formal equivalence" translations. One reason for this seems to be that the orientation toward the receptor's response helps the translator to avoid awkwardness in expression that creeps in easily due to source language interference. However, another reason seems to be that the "dynamic equivalence" approach does, in fact, allow for a number of context-conditioned adaptations, though these are presented as linguistic changes.

One area in which this happens is that of figurative language. In the framework of componential analysis adopted by Nida and Taber, "... figurative extensions are based upon some supplementary component in the primary meaning which becomes essential in the extended meaning" (1969, p. 88). Thus in the expression "He is a fox", the figurative meaning is "... mediated through a supplementary - and purely conventional - component which claims that the fox is particularly deceptive and clever." (1969, p. 87)

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10 Another problem in the area of Bible translation in particular is that the translator, and also the translation theorist himself, belongs to a culture and time usually very different from that of the original. This makes it very difficult to judge realistically what the dynamics of the original were like for the original audience. (See House (1981), pp. 8ff, for a criticism of the "dynamic equivalence" approach on similar grounds, though I do not agree with her point that "dynamic equivalence" must be rejected because it cannot be "empirically *tested*" (House 1981, p. 9)). In particular, it gives rise to the danger that - perhaps subconsciously - we judge the response of the receptor language audience against our own response, rather than against a careful reconstruction of what the original response might have been.

Since such figurative extensions are "often arbitrary and conventional, they are almost always specific to a particular culture and language", and, accordingly, they can give rise to communication problems in translation. To avoid such problems, the translator may need to use a different figurative expression. Thus if in another culture rabbits or spiders are considered "deceptively clever", then the translator would need to substitute accordingly. The legitimacy of such a substitution would rest on the assumption that this is a purely linguistic change: the expression in the translation is chosen on the basis of the meaning component it shares with that found in the figurative extension in the original.

However, as Sperber and Wilson have argued in a number of places (1986a, 1986b a.o.), there is good reason to believe that such "extended meanings" arise not from linguistic meanings or components of meaning, but rather from information stored in the encyclopaedic entry associated, for example, with the concept "fox".[11] As such it is not semantic, but contextual information: it is not the case that the English word *fox* has a linguistic meaning component "deceptively clever", but rather it is a popular stereotype of English speakers that foxes have this particular characteristic. When the expression "He is a fox" is used in any given instance, the audience will look for an interpretation consistent with the Principle of Relevance, and depending on the contextual assumptions available, will arrive either at a literal or some figurative interpretation.

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11 For more detail on encyclopaedic entries and the organisation of information associated with concepts see chapter 6, section 3.

If this view is correct, then such adaptations should not be acceptable in a theory of "linguistic translation", and this would place "dynamic equivalence" translation still further from its declared goal.

2.2 Secondary communication problems and "idiomatic translation"

Of the various problems that arise from secondary communication, in "idiomatic approaches" special attention is paid to "implicit information":

> "In every text that one may want to translate, there will be information which is *implicit*; that is, it is not stated in an *explicit* form in the text itself. Some information, or meaning, is left *implicit* because of the structure of the source language; some because it has already been included elsewhere in the text, and some because of shared information in the communication situation. However, the *implicit* information is part of the meaning which is to be communicated by the translation, because it is part of the meaning intended to be understood by the original writer." (Beekman and Callow 1974, p. 38; italics as in original)

Now on the grounds that such information is already part of the original message, "idiomatic approaches" not only allow, but call for the explication of such information in the translated text, if it cannot be conveyed implicitly in a given instance:

> "It is clear, therefore, that the translator needs to take into careful consideration the presence of implicit information in the original, so that it may be used explicitly when it is needed in the RL version." (Beekman and Callow 1974, p. 47)

> "[Implicit information] will sometimes need to be made *explicit* because the source language writer and his audience shared information which is not shared by the receptor language audience." (Larson 1984, p. 42)

One of the examples given by Beekman and Callow (1974) concerns Mark 1:35ff which the King James Version, following the Greek rather closely, translates as follows:

> "35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary

> place, and there prayed. 36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. 37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All *men* seek for thee." (italics as in the original)

On the grounds that when dealing with a series of events, different languages tend to differ in which events they make explicit or leave implicit, Beekman and Callow suggest that in some language(s) verse 36 of the section cited above may need to be rendered as follows, the italics indicating the "explicated" information:

> "And *when it dawned* Simon and they that were with him *in the house arose and saw that Jesus was not there. They went out and* followed after him." (1974, p. 54; italics as in the original)

Unlike Nida and Taber (1969), neither Beekman and Callow (1974) nor Larson (1984) commit themselves to a notion of "linguistic translation". In fact, Beekman and Callow state that "Occasionally, ..., the translator needs to draw on information available in the remote and cultural contexts as well as the information he can find in the immediate context" (1974, p. 57).

On the other hand, the idiomatic translator is not free to explicate just any information; the general rule is that implicit information "... is made explicit because the grammar, or the meanings, or the dynamics of the RL [= receptor language] require it in order that the information conveyed will be the same as that conveyed to the original readers." (Beekman and Callow 1974, p. 58)

On the face of it, it might seem that with these guidelines - those given by Larson (1984) correspond closely to them - "idiomatic approaches" provide all that is theoretically necessary for the translator to achieve his aim of conveying the same message as the original: he is led to explicate all and only the information needed to that end.

However, there are significant problems here because the concepts of meaning and communication on which the "idiomatic approaches" rest are deficient in some rather important respects. To see this, let me begin with a brief outline of how these approaches view the meaning of texts.

According to "idiomatic approaches", a text has "surface structures", which are grammatical, lexical and phonological structures, and it also has a "deep structure" which consists of propositions and other elements that give, for example, indications about speech acts and about interpropositional relations. The "surface structures" constitute the "form" of the text, and the "deep structure" its meaning, which is what the translator is to convey:

> "Behind the *surface structure* is the *deep structure*, the meaning. It is this *meaning* that serves as the base for translation into another language." (Larson 1984, p. 26)[12]

However, the relationship between "surface" and "deep structure" is not as straightforward as one might have thought, and it is largely these complications that make translation so difficult. One problem is that typically language allows for "skewing" between "surface" and "deep structure": for example, there can be "skewing" between the grammatical form of a language and its illocutionary

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12 Most of the quotations are taken from Larson (1984) since she presents a more explicit account of meaning than Beekman and Callow (1974). However, the assumptions about meaning in both works seem to be the same in all aspects relevant to our discussion here. K. Callow is working on a comprehensive theory of communication (Callow forthcoming).

force, a typical case in point being "rhetorical questions" that have the grammatical form of questions, but can have rather different illocutionary force. Thus a mother who is angry with her son for not having emptied the garbage might say, "When are you going to empty the garbage?". In this case, "the semantic illocutionary force is one of *command*, but the grammatical form is that of a *question* which would normally be used to ask about *time*." (Larson 1984, p. 235; italics as in original) In many instances such "skewing" will be used to convey "emotive meaning".

Another problem with language is that of "implicit information", which is defined as "... that [information] for which there is no form but the information is part of the total communication intended or assumed by the writer" (Larson 1984, p. 38).

Before examining these views, it is only fair to acknowledge that Larson points out with regard to her assumptions about semantics that the main objective of her book is not in the area of theory but of practice: "The aim of the book is not to argue linguistic theory but to present tools which will help translators." (1984, p. 26) However, as we shall see, theoretical assumptions are important in that the value of the tools suggested depends on the validity of the framework in which they are developed.

Perhaps the best point from which to examine the notion of meaning used in "idiomatic approaches" is that of "implicit information", because here the problems can be seen most clearly. As we just saw, "implicit information" is defined as that "... for which there is no form", but which is nevertheless "... part of the total communication intended or assumed by the writer" (Larson 1984, p.

38). Since the approach treats language as a form-meaning correlate, this raises the first important question: if "implicit" meaning is not in the "form" of the text - how is it conveyed? It is obviously assumed to be in the "deep structure" - but how does it get there? Larson suggests:

> "Some information, or meaning, is left *implicit* because of the structure of the source language; some because it has already been included elsewhere in the text, and some because of shared information in the communication situation." (1984, p. 38, italics as in original)

This gives some indication as to the *source* of "implicit information", but it still does not explain how a particular piece of shared information in the communication situation, rather than any other piece of information equally shared, comes to be included as part of the intended meaning of a text. Consider the following example given by Larson:

> "Information which is left *implicit* when talking to one person might be made *explicit* when talking to another. A woman might say to her husband, *'Peter is sick.'* In reporting the same information to the doctor she would say, *'My son Peter is sick,'* or *'My son is sick.'* The information *my son* was not needed to identify *Peter* when talking to her husband who knew very well who *Peter* was." (1984, p. 40)

Larson then goes on to explain:

> "There is a difference between *implicit* information and information which is simply *absent* and never intended to be part of the communication. For instance, in the example *'My son Peter is sick,'* the mother did not say, *'Peter has brown hair and is ten years old.'* This is not *implied*. It is *absent*. It is not part of the communication and, therefore, should not be added." (1984, p. 42)

While all this is true enough - our intuitions clearly go that way - there is a puzzle here that Larson does not

answer; if I understand her argument correctly, it goes like this: when talking to her husband, the woman does not need to add *my son* because her husband knows who Peter is - it is shared information in the communication situation. However, by the same token, the fact that Peter has brown hair and is ten years old is equally well-known to the father - and yet, as Larson claims and as we would all agree, one would not normally feel that either *Peter is sick* or *My son Peter is sick* is intended to convey the idea 'Peter has brown hair and is ten years old.' Thus the fact that information is shared in a communication situation - or that it has been mentioned earlier in a text, for that matter - is, in and of itself, obviously not a sufficient condition for defining implicit information, and despite her claim that there is an important distinction between "implicit" and "absent" information, she offers no further clarification of the difference.

This gap in the theory is significant from two perspectives: from the practical point of view it leaves the translator without needed guidance when it comes to identifying what information is or is not implied in a text; this is one of the reasons why among translators following the "idiomatic approaches" the matter of "implicit information" has been a perennial topic of debate. From the theoretical perspective the lack of an explicit account of the nature of "implicit information" has given rise to a number of misconceptions about "implicit information". And as we shall see, these misconceptions have in turn given rise to practices that seem questionable.

One of these misconceptions concerns "implicit information" involved in the metaphorical uses of language. According to Larson (1984), "*Metaphors* and *similes* are

grammatical forms which represent two propositions in the semantic structure", that are related to each other by way of comparison, where "the *comparison* is always that of some likeness" (1984, p. 246). However, often that likeness or "point of similarity" is left implicit:

> "In the sentence *The moon is like blood*, the two propositions are:
>
> 1. The moon is (red).
> 2. Blood is (red)." (1984, p. 247)

But the "point of similarity" is not always as obvious as in this example. Thus another example given by Larson gives is the following:

(2) "John eats like a pig". (1984, p. 248)

She comments:

> "The *point of similarity* is not given. Maybe the proposition is *the pig eats too much*, or *the pig eats fast*, or *the pig eats sloppily*. Until we can fill in the comment about the *pig*, we do not know the *point of similarity* to *John*." (1984, p. 248)

How can the translator find out such implicit information? Larson suggests: "Often the context in which a metaphor is used will give clues which will help in the interpretation". (1984, p. 249)

Apart from the lack of explicitness already noted, this view of similes and metaphors is quite mistaken in the two related assumptions that these figurative expressions always represent two propositions, and that there is always *one* "point of similarity". Sperber and Wilson (1986a; 1986b) not only offer an explicit account of how the implicatures of figurative language are conveyed, but have also shown that the very point of figurative uses of language is that they convey a *wider* range of proposi-

tions, even in the case of highly standardized metaphors. Thus Sperber and Wilson discuss the following example:

(3) "This room is a pigsty." (1986a, p. 236)

Having pointed out that, perhaps due to some stereotyped assumptions, such standardized metaphors typically convey "... one or two dominant and highly accessible assumptions" (1986a, p. 236), in this case perhaps "... the implication that the room is filthy and untidy", the authors add:

> "However, the speaker must have intended to convey something more than this if the relative indirectness of the utterance is to be justified: an image, say, of filthiness and untidiness beyond the norm, beyond what could have been satisfactorily conveyed by saying merely 'This room is filthy and untidy.' Thus even this highly standardized example cannot be paraphrased without loss." (1986a, p. 236)

But many metaphors convey much more than this:

> "In general, the wider the range of potential implicatures and the greater the hearer's responsibility for constructing them, the more poetic the effect, the more creative the metaphor." (1986a, p. 236)

Going back to Larson's example "John eats like a pig", the expectation that there is *one* "point of similarity" which the translator has to identify in order to understand the simile is quite mistaken: in order for the figurative use to be justified the audience would, in fact, invariably look for an interpretation that implies more than that. Beekman and Callow (1974) propose the same scheme of analysis for metaphorical language. We see here, then, that one of the consequences of the failure to come to grips with "implicit information" in "idiomatic approaches" is that it is prone to mislead the trans-

lator concerning the meaning of metaphorical expressions.[13]

However, these problems with implicit information in metaphorical language reveal another, more general misconception of "implicit information", and that is the assumption that it is determinate. Thus, as we saw (p. 134 above), the translator is admonished to distinguish clearly between information that is "implicit" and other information that is "absent" - which would seem to presuppose a clear distinction between the two. Yet, as Sperber and Wilson (1986a) have shown, there is good reason to believe that this is not the case:

> "The fiction that there is a clear-cut distinction between wholly determinate, specifically intended inferences and indeterminate, wholly unintended inferences cannot be maintained." (p. 199)

Rather relevance theory has shown that implicatures vary along a continuum of relative strength, so that the

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13 It is interesting to note that despite their theoretical inadequacy, "idiomatic approaches" do show sensitivity to the fact that there may be more to metaphorical expressions than their analysis suggests. This may be seen in their reluctance to replace metaphorical expressions altogether by their literal equivalents except as a last resort: "... the first approach is to retain the form of a metaphor (...). If this is inadequate, then the form of a simile is tried. If this still fails to communicate, then a nonfigurative form is used." (Beekman and Callow 1974, p. 145) However, they themselves view this as a consequence of concern for "form" - which is somewhat surprising in an otherwise meaning-oriented approach: "From the general theoretical standpoint, this discussion is a further illustration of the principle that while in an idiomatic translation meaning always takes precedence over form, this does not mean that the form of the original is completely ignored. There are circumstances, as in the present discussion on translating metaphor and simile, when the special literary form of the original is taken into consideration when deciding on the RL form." (1974, p. 145, footnote 3)

weaker an implicature is, the more responsibility lies with the audience for deriving it.

Example (2) above could well be a case in point: one can think of situations where none of the three propositions considered would be more strongly implied than the others, but all of them would belong to a range of somewhat weaker implicatures. In such situations, more responsibility rests with the audience for the resulting interpretation than it does, for example, in example (3).

In his analysis of Matthew 2, France was clearly aware of this indeterminacy and open-endedness of implicatures, and he saw their communicative value when he suggested that "... Matthew would not necessarily have found this regrettable", but rather that "... he was deliberately composing a chapter rich in potential exegetical bonuses, so that the more fully a reader shared the religious traditions and scriptural erudition of the author, the more he was likely to derive from his reading, ..." (France 1981, p. 250; quoted here again for convenience)

Relevance theory has no problem in accounting for such indeterminacy, but recognizes it clearly as a regular part of human communication. However, it does pose considerable problems for "idiomatic approaches", with their commitment that the translator should convey both the explicit and implicit information of the original. One problem is how the translator can know whether he has fulfilled his task of conveying the same "message" in cases involving indeterminate sets of implicatures. The assumption of "idiomatic approaches" that, for example, metaphors represent two propositions with one point of similarity has been helpful to the translator since it is fairly easy to compare original and translation within

this framework. However, it is not at all clear how such sameness of meaning is to be evaluated when one is dealing with open-ended and non-enumerable sets of implicatures of varying strength.

Another range of problems arising from these misconceptions in "idiomatic approaches" has to do with the general solution proposed to remedy communication problems in the area of "implicit information", namely the "explication" of this information in the translated text.[14]

One problem is that there has been little recognition of the true extent to which implicatures are involved in communication, and hence of the true degree to which explication might be needed. Let us begin with as simple an example as (2) above (p. 136). In a case where no equivalent metaphor or simile can be found to convey such "implicit information", should the translator list all three propositions explicitly, that is, render this simile as "John eats like a pig too much, too fast and too sloppily"? But this might involve some arbitrariness - perhaps the similarity extends also to the noises produced by pigs when eating? Should this, therefore, be

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14 In fact, two remedies are provided: "explication" as a general measure, and "change of form" with regard to figurative expressions. Thus the "metaphorical form" of a source language expression may be changed to a "nonfigurative form"; for example, Beekman and Callow suggest that the metaphorical "I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17) "may be cast in a nonfigurative form. It would then read, 'You have been working catching fish, now I will give you a new work making disciples for me.'" (1974, p. 148) However, it is clear from the point of view of relevance theory that the change made here is not one of form, but of meaning; in fact, the new rendering would seem to have lost virtually all the implicatures that arise from the presentation of the disciples as "fishers of men".

listed as well? What if still other similarities come to mind? Where does one stop listing? Note that there need not be any clear cut-off point, in which case no non-arbitrary decision would be possible.

The extent of this problem of indeterminacy and open-endedness of implicature can be seen more clearly when one considers more involved uses of metaphorical language, as, for example, the following passage from Matthew 2:

> "Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:
>
> A voice was heard in Ramah,
> wailing and loud lamentation,
> Rachel weeping for her children;
> she refused to be consoled,
> because they were no more."
> (Matthew 2:17f; Revised Standard Version)

Here we are dealing with a rather elaborate metaphor, that is very rich in a comparatively large number of weak implicatures, which together create an impression rather than convey a clearly specifiable message. Given that this metaphor relies heavily on knowledge of the Old Testament and of Palestinian geography - one would have to add a great deal of information to convey the intended interpretation to readers who lacked knowledge of both, as would be the case, say, with the average person among the Silt'i-people of Ethiopia.[15] Also, to understand this passage fully, the reader would need to be acquainted with the generally accepted ways of using Old Testament texts as predictions of contemporary events.

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15 The Silt'i-people number around 200,000 and speak an Ethio-Semitic language. My family and I lived among the Silt'i people from 1976-1979, studying their language.

Furthermore, in the literature on translation, attention is mostly paid to "implicit information" with regard to the meaning of sentences, possibly of paragraphs.[16] Implicatures at the level of a chapter or larger unit of text, as noted in France's analysis of Matthew 2, are not generally addressed. If they were, for many situations involving secondary communication, the amount of information needing "explication" in order to convey the same "message" would be of considerable size. Thus earlier on in this chapter (p. 123 above) we noted that the following "explication" might be needed to clearly convey the "surface meaning" of Matthew chapter 2 to contemporary English readers:

"Thus we see that the fact that Jesus is called 'Jesus of Nazareth' is no reason to be embarrassed. Rather, as we have seen, God brought him there in a number of steps, each of which he himself directed, beginning, as our belief demands, in Bethlehem, and culminating in Nazareth."

And there would be further points in this one chapter that would require the explication of contextual assumptions and/or implications if the translator was really fully committed to the task of communicating the set of

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16 This tendency is reflected in the claim by Beekman and Callow that most of the "implicit information" that needs explication is found in the immediate context: "Most of the implicit information that is relevant to understanding the document is contained within the document itself, and it is only rarely necessary for the translator to draw on information from outside of it. In fact, most of the relevant implicit information within the document is drawn from the immediate context, that is to say, from within the particular paragraph being studied or from an adjacent one." (1974, p. 49)

assumptions intended by the original communicator, leading to additions to the text that would be quite substantial.

If such "explication" were done, it would almost certainly run into two kinds of practical problems. One would be how, under these circumstances, the translator could comply with another requirement of the "idiomatic approaches" made specifically with regard to the explication of "implicit information":

> "A further note of caution is needed lest this new information distort the theme or focus intended in the original document. It is very important that the translator who is introducing information new to the receptor audience, but not new to the original audience, does not use forms that will make it seem like mainline or thematic material. The discourse could become distorted, or too much emphasis given to something which is not that important to the original author. Such information should be presented in such a subtle or natural way that the intended prominence of the source text is not distorted." (Larson 1984, p. 456)

It is difficult to see how this demand could reasonably be fulfilled with regard to the example of Matthew 2 as discussed, and there are certainly numerous other biblical texts where "implicit information" causes problems of similar magnitude in secondary communication situations.

The other practical problem has to do with acceptability: it seems more than likely that such a degree of "explication" would be found unacceptable by many audiences, especially when applied to biblical texts. One might be tempted to regard this matter of acceptability as not too serious: after all, with enough re-education, perhaps people could become reconciled to this new way of translating. However, more is at stake here than popular views of translation, and we shall return to this matter in

chapter 7 (section 4) where we discuss the issue of successful communication.

So far our discussion of "implicit information" has focussed mainly on information that might be missed due to lack of the right contextual assumptions on the part of the receptor language audience. However, problems of "implicit information" also arise when the audience uses contextual information of the wrong kind, so that it arrives at wrong implications, as the following example from Beekman and Callow shows:

> "Mark 2:4 says, 'And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was ... .' Since no indication was given of how four men, carrying a paralyzed friend, could get onto a roof (and the language helper tended, naturally enough, to think in terms of his own familiar steep thatched roof), the language helper assumed a miracle, similar to Philip's sudden removal from the presence of the Ethiopian official to Azotus. Here, the Greek narrative left an intervening event implicit - that they climbed the outside stairs onto the roof. It is not always possible to leave this implicit in other languages." (1974, p. 47)

I have proposed an analysis from the point of view of relevance theory elsewhere (Gutt 1987a). What I want to point out here is that there is little reason to believe that wrong implicatures can generally be remedied by explication. In his chapter "Ruth in Central Africa: a cultural commentary", Wendland (1987) provides examples of misinterpretations of the book of Ruth that are likely to arise in a Central African context. One of these instances refers to the timing of Ruth's return to her home town:

> "So Naomi returned from Moab ... , arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning." (Ruth 1:22, New International Version)

Wendland comments:

> "The time reference here is important, since in a Tonga sociocultural setting it would immediately arouse the suspicions of the people whose village Naomi was entering. A person does not usually move during the period extending from after the fields have been planted until after the harvest has been completed. One's crops mean life, and therefore it must have been some serious offense which drove Naomi away from her former home at such a time. Perhaps it had been that she was guilty of practising witchcraft - after all, were not all her men now dead?" (1987, p. 171)

Wendland does not offer a solution to this problem, and it is difficult to see how a translator could effectively prevent the receptor language audience from bringing all their particular cultural assumptions to bear on the interpretation of this passage, especially when a number of points in the story seem to corroborate the misinterpretation. Note that the problem here is not one of what is said or how it is said - the problem is that the events reported in the story readily combine with a number of highly accessible contextual assumptions that result in a highly plausible, though mistaken, interpretation for the receptor language audience.

Lastly, let us turn to the claim that "idiomatic translations" should resemble the original in its "dynamics". Beekman and Callow (1974) write:

> "The naturalness of the translation and the ease with which it is understood should be comparable to the naturalness of the original and to the ease with which the recipients of the original documents understood them." (p. 34)

They point out that some allowance needs to be made for problems caused by differences in language and culture:

> "Such a comparison of the dynamics of the original with that of a translation must bear in mind that the message may have been easier for the original

> recipients to understand because Greek was the language of both writers and readers, and they shared the same or similar cultures." (Beekman and Callow 1974, p. 34)

Yet they do not consider these differences as serious obstacles that might invalidate the demand for naturalness and ease of comprehension of the translated text because the writers "... wrote to be understood":

> ... On the other hand, the message was not dependent upon these local advantages since the writers were not penning abstract theses or obscure philosophies but had a very practical aim in view; they wrote to be understood." (Beekman and Callow 1974, p. 34)

This last quote is significant in revealing the lack of understanding of the crucial role that context plays in communication: it seems to strongly imply that there is a way of "writing to be understood" that is independent of differences in contextual assumptions, such as arise from historical, cultural and other differences.

In a similar vein, Larson (1984) claims:

> "A natural and clear translation is not dependent on familiar information. New information, even historical facts, can be presented in a natural and clear manner." (p. 430)

We have already looked at the problem of supplying all the needed "new information" in a translation. However, there is another factor that is crucial for communication, especially for "ease of comprehension", that is not addressed by these authors at all: and this is that for successful communication the intended interpretation must not only be recoverable with ease - but also that it must lead to adequate contextual effects. As we tried to show from the genealogy at the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew (p. 125 above), it is doubtful that a modern

English reader with little theological or historical interest would find that section very rewarding in terms of contextual effects. But without adequate contextual effects the criterion of consistency with the principle of relevance would not be satisfied; this often means that the reader gets the impression that the text is irrelevant to him, and a natural reaction to irrelevance is termination of the communication process: in other words, the receptor puts the translation aside. There is probably no greater threat to a translation approach committed to communication than such a complete breakdown.

We may know this reaction to perceived irrelevance from our own experience. In the case of Bible translation the research of Dye (1980) lends further support to the seriousness of lack of perceived relevance. Dye investigated the impact of fifteen Bible translation projects in various parts of the world, and found that among all the various parameters studied, the single most important one was what Dye - quite independently of relevance theory - called the "principle of personal relevance", that is, the degree to which the receptor language audience was able to see the relevance of the translated texts to their lives.

It may be worthwhile pointing out that relevance theory allows us here to draw a significant distinction with regard to relevance. Suppose a beginner with computers has a problem with the screen display; he has a handbook - but only one that is actually written for advanced users. In this situation the handbook, with the information it contains, is highly relevant to that beginner - it contains the solution to his problem. However, in spite of this, it might be of little use to the person concerned because he might well find the processing effort too high, requiring him, perhaps, to study other in-

troductory literature on computers first. This difference can be accounted for in our relevance-theoretic framework: the handbook is *not irrelevant* - it does have contextual implications for the reader; however, the fact that the derivation of such contextual implications would require great processing effort makes the use of this handbook *inconsistent with the principle of relevance* for this audience. Similarly for the examples taken from Matthew: to say that some of these passages are not interpretable in consistency with the principle of relevance by a certain audience is not to say that they are irrelevant.

As pointed out above, "idiomatic approaches" do not address these problems, and so it is not clear how they would want to overcome them.

In conclusion, we see here that, while "idiomatic approaches" recognize the importance of "implicit information" for translation in secondary communication situations, and allow for its "explication", the solutions offered are impaired by an inadequate understanding of communication in general and of implicature in particular. They give rise to theory-internal inconsistencies, and there is reason to doubt that the treatment they suggest can achieve at least in principle, if not in practice, the aim of "idiomatic translations" that convey the "message" of the original, consisting of both its "explicit" and "implicit" information.

At this point someone might raise the following objection: granted that secondary communication situations can cause problems for translation - have we not perhaps exaggerated the seriousness of these problems? After all, neither the "dynamic equivalence" approach nor the "idiomatic approaches" insist on identity of the messages in

every detail; they are content with a high degree of approximation.

It seems to me that such an objection would betray a lack of understanding of the nature and significance of the problems surveyed above. Firstly, it should be clear from the examples considered that our concern here was not with matters of detail; on the contrary, the main example from Matthew 2 was chosen because it involved problems about the main point of that chapter. Nor is this an isolated example, as, for example, the following statements by Headland (1981) about his experience in translating the New Testament for the Casiguran Dumagat people in the Philippines show:[17]

> "I am fairly sure that no Dumagat believer has yet grasped the important significance of the first church council in Jerusalem, as reported in Acts 15. Luke would be more than disappointed to see how the Dumagat misses the point." (1981, p. 19)
>
> "There must be a way too, I suppose, to get the message of Hebrews 7 across, that the reason that Jesus is a better intervener for us to God than the Levitical priests is because Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek! That message ought to get across - it is the central message of that section of the book. Why don't the Dumagat readers get it?" (1981, p. 19)

Thus the real problem is not the loss of detail but of main points and overall thrust.

Secondly, it is quite true that translation does not always encounter problems as severe as those considered

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17 The Casiguran Dumagat are "... a Negrito society of hunters and gatherers, living in a tropical rain forest in Aurora Province, Philippines" (Headland 1981, p. 25, footnote 1)

here; in fact, relevance theory predicts that the more similar the two audiences are with regard to contextual assumptions needed for the understanding of the text, that is, the closer the situation is to one of primary communication, the fewer the problems will be. However, what we are interested in here is not a theory that will work well only in the less problematic situations, but an account of translation in general. Therefore our concern in this chapter has been to examine whether *as general theories of translation* the "dynamic equivalence" approach and the "idiomatic approaches" provide evidence that the goals they have set for translation are achievable *in principle* in both primary and secondary communication situations. As we have seen, due to inadequate views of communication and meaning, this they fail to show.

Thirdly, the evidence provided by Headland (1981), Dye (1980) and probably also by our own experience confirms that this deficiency is not only a problem from the theoretical point of view, but that it has significant effects on the effectiveness of translation in practice as well.

Our next question will be whether relevance theory provides a basis for developing a general theory of translation that can perhaps guarantee communication of the same message - or a close approximation of it - in both primary and secondary communication situations.

3 Translating the same "message" by interpretive use?

In the previous section we considered some basic problems with the "dynamic equivalence" and "idiomatic" approaches to translation. Essentially these problems are due to an inadequate understanding of communication, that is, to a code-model view. This raises the question: given that relevance theory offers a more adequate account of communication - can it not provide a framework for what those other translation theories tried to do? In other words, can it show how the translator can succeed in communicating to the receptor language audience the set of assumptions the original communicator intended to communicate to his original audience?

Within relevance theory, such an endeavour might seem to be analysable as a variety of "interpretive use" (cf. chapter 2, section 4): the translator produces a receptor language text, the translation, with the intention of communicating to the receptors the same assumptions that the original communicator intended to convey to the original audience. Let us now examine what light relevance theory can shed on such an endeavour.

As we pointed out in chapter 2 (section 4.3), the intended interpretation of an utterance consists of its explicatures and/or implicatures. Thus to say that a translation should communicate the same interpretation as that intended in the original means that it should convey to the receptors *all and only those explicatures and implicatures that the original was intended to convey*.

On closer examination this demand can be taken in two distinct ways; on the first and stronger reading it can be interpreted as follows:

(4) The explicatures of the translation should be the same as the explicatures of the original, and the implicatures of the translation should be the same as the implicatures of the original.

It is not difficult to see that on this reading the demand is likely to create conflicts in secondary communication situations; thus the preservation of a given explicature may give rise to an unintended implicature because of the different cognitive environment of the receptors. Consider the implicature in Wendland's Tonga example (p. 145 above): combined with the beliefs of the Tonga people, the explicatures of the text implicated that Naomi's reason for leaving Moab must have been something very serious indeed, and that she might have been a witch. As will be recalled, this implicature had to do with the particular timing of her departure - prior to the barley harvest - and with the death of her two sons-in-law.

Omitting these explicatures would violate the demand of preserving the explicatures of the original - so it is not really an option for the translator committed to conveying the meaning of the original. Tolerating such erroneous implicatures would also violate this commitment. So one might consider cancelling them by explicit statements that would contradict them. However, since the original author did not seem interested in communicating the denials of these implicatures, cancelling them by explicit denial would not be an acceptable option either: it would again misrepresent the assumptions communicated by the original.

As we can see now, this kind of problem is not unique or exceptional, but a perfectly general one: it follows from the inferential nature of communication that secondary

communication situations can give rise to clashes between the demands of communicating both the explicatures and the implicatures of the original.

However, there is a weaker reading of the requirement that the meaning of the original be translated:

(5) The sum total of the explicatures and implicatures of the translation must equal the sum total of the explicatures and implicatures of the original.

This reading reduces the danger of a clash between explicatures and implicatures in the translation because the translator is not a priori committed to maintaining all explicatures as explicatures, and it is imaginable that in some cases at least he can "reshuffle" the explicit and implicit assumptions in a way that will avoid conflict. As we saw earlier in this chapter (section 2.2), such "reshuffling" of information is, in fact, considered a legitimate part of "communicative" approaches to translation.

This raises an immediate question: what reason is there to expect such a "reshuffle" to be possible? As we saw in chapter 2 (especially section 4.3), the meaning of an utterance is not simply the proposition partly encoded by it, but a set of interrelated assumptions; furthermore, the meaning of each utterance is influenced by the meaning of its predecessors. With such intricate interrelations it seems rather arbitrary to assume that these assumptions can be rearranged without significant loss. Returning to our example of Matthew 2: how likely is it that one can produce a translation that will convey Matthew's intended "message" to a present-day English reader, just by "reshuffling" its explicatures and implicatures?

However, quite apart from this practical problem, such an approach would be faced with the same issues encountered with the "explication" of "implicit information" in the "idiomatic approaches". Thus it would still have to deal with the indeterminacy of implicature, which raises the problem of how open-ended sets of implicatures with varying degrees of strength can be turned into explicatures. As we saw in our discussion of the "idiomatic approaches", there seems to be no principled way of doing this that does not involve arbitrariness and distortion.[18]

It would also still face the problem of avoiding extraneous implicatures. This would be a particular problem in cases where the intended interpretation of the original does not include explicatures or implicatures that would cancel the unintended implicatures derived by the receptor language audience.

However, in a way the issue of whether it is possible to "redistribute" the explicatures and implicatures of the original is only of secondary importance. Much more important is the basic assumption on which this approach is based - that it should be possible, at least in principle, to communicate a particular "message" or interpretation to any audience, no matter what their cognitive environment is like.

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18 An additional problem not encountered with the "idiomatic approaches" is that this "reshuffle" in analytic and contextual implications would not yet include the possibility of conveying contextual assumptions in the form of analytic implications.

This assumption has, in fact, been challenged by several translation theorists. Reiss and Vermeer (1984, p. 104), for example, have challenged it along semiotic lines, arguing that since texts are parts of larger wholes, that is, of culture and language, their transfer into other cultures and languages will change the texts themselves. And Frawley (1984) has made the strong claim that translation theory has, in fact, abandoned "... the ridiculous insistence on 'preservation of meaning'" (p. 173).

While I would not be sure that Frawley's evaluation is justified, relevance theory does confirm that there is a problem of principle here. One of the necessary conditions for successful communication is that the recovery of the intended interpretation is dependent on the recovery of adequate contextual effects. This is crucial because adequate contextual effects are required by the criterion of consistency with the principle of relevance - which is the only means by which an audience can discover what the communicator intended to convey. In other words: if an audience does not achieve adequate effects in an act of communication - or does not, at the least, see what adequate effects the communicator might reasonably have expected to achieve - it cannot be confident about having discovered what the communicator intended to convey.

When the original communicator formed his informative intention, that is, when he decided what he wanted to communicate, he was influenced by the mutual cognitive environment he shared with his audience, that is, the original audience. More specifically, the selection of the assumptions which he intended to communicate was determined by his belief that their recovery would have adequate contextual effects on his audience, under optimal processing.

However, since contextual effects are obviously context-dependent, there is no reason to assume that the same set of assumptions would yield adequate contextual effects with another audience that had a cognitive environment different from the original one. And this is where the basic assumption of "communicative approaches" seems to have gone wrong: they have assumed that the aim of conveying the intended interpretation of the original to any receptor language audience anywhere is a reasonable one, no matter how different their cognitive environments might be. The real problem of translation has been seen as that of choosing the right linguistic form:

> "All translators are agreed that their task is to communicate the meaning of the original. There is no discussion on this point. There is discussion, however, concerning the linguistic form to be used." (Beekman and Callow 1974, p. 20)

Yet even from intralingual experience we know that we cannot necessarily communicate the same thoughts to just anybody, regardless of their background knowledge. When addressing different audiences, we tend to change what we want to convey to them, not only how we say it. From this perspective it seems quite arbitrary to demand that a translator should intend to convey to a modern English audience what Matthew intended to communicate to his first century audience in the Middle East. As we tried to illustrate using chapter 2 of Matthew's gospel (section 1 above), many of the assumptions Matthew intended to convey would seem of comparatively low relevance to many modern English readers. This is not to say that the text cannot be relevant to them at all. Rather the question is whether they will find it relevant enough to be worth their processing effort.

This perspective may prove fruitful for a better understanding of the problems encountered by Headland (1981;

p. 149 above). Headland rejected the diagnosis commonly suggested that the "rate" of information was too high and that therefore the problems could be overcome by "spreading out" the information over longer units of text:

> "I hypothesize that the *information rate* cannot be spread out for Casiguran Dumagat, ..., but that secondary information would be better eliminated altogether in those passages where it hinders the message from getting through to the hearer" (1981, p. 22)

Headland felt rather that the *total* amount of information was simply too much, no matter how much one spreads it out: the biblical texts very often seemed to convey more information than the Dumagat people were used to processing.

This phenomenon can be explained, at least in part, in terms of inadequate contextual effects. Thus suppose the Dumagat readers were unable to derive adequate contextual effects from the information offered in the translation - which was, after all, intended for a rather different audience in the first place; then it is clear why the spreading out of information would not really solve their problem. While conveying information in a less condensed form can certainly reduce processing effort - it does not, in and of itself, lead to an increase in contextual effects. Headland's own tendency was to simply omit some of the information, though his reverence for the biblical texts kept him from implementing this strategy fully.[19]

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19 He writes: "My own doctrine of the Scriptures keeps me from applying this hypothesis. At least one recent consultant thought I had done too much of it already. I would like to have done more, but not until I can get a solid translation principle to back me up (...)." (Headland 1981, 22) As we shall see, relevance theory provides principled answers to these problems.

Yet from the point of view of successful communication, his intuition was probably right.

In short, the point is simply this: the interpretation of a stimulus is always relevance-determined, and hence context-dependent. It is therefore not always possible to take some given "meaning" or "message" and produce a stimulus that will be able to communicate just this "message" to some particular audience. Whether or not this is possible will depend on whether the "message" in question is communicable to that audience in terms of consistency with the principle of relevance. The view that the main problem in translation is that of finding the right way of expressing the content in the receptor language has tended to obscure the problem of the communicability of the content itself.

It seems, then, that our investigation of the possibility of setting up a general theory of translation around the requirement that the translated text should convey the same "message" to the receptor language audience as the original was intended to convey to the source language has led us to a negative result: while this aim may be achievable in situations of primary communication, its achievement in general becomes less likely the more different the context of the receptor language audience is from that of the source language audience envisaged by the original communicator.[20] This problem is not due to a

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20 Note that this idea could still serve as the goal of a translation theory that would limit itself to primary communication situations (cf. p. 118 above); however, such situations seem to be the exception rather than the rule, and as we shall see in chapter 7, there is a way of taking into account both primary and secondary communication situations within a single, integrated approach.

deficiency of any particular translation theory, nor even of linguistic mismatches between the languages involved, but it is a necessary outcome of the inferential nature of communication and its strong dependence on context.[21]

So if the aim of conveying the same message does not provide a tenable basis for a general theory of translation - can relevance theory help us to find some valid alternative?

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21 Perhaps it is interesting to ask why translation theorists should have pursued this aim in the first place. Apart from its obvious attractiveness, I think the fact that much of the thinking of translation theory in the course of history took place in a setting that did not involve too extreme a variety in context, e.g. culture, may have contributed to this.

Chapter 5

Translation as interlingual interpretive use

1 Introduction

If, as we argued in chapter 4, interpretive use cannot serve as the basis of a translation theory designed to convey the same "message", that is, both the explicatures and implicatures of the original, could it not serve as a framework for a general theory of translation of a less ambitious kind?[1] The simplest possibility would be if translation *were* interpretive use across language boundaries. In other words, a translation would be a receptor language text that interpretively resembled the original.

From a theoretical point of view, such a theory would, of course, be attractive in that the only stipulation needed to differentiate translation from other instances of interpretive use would be that the original and the new text belong to two different languages.

However, before accepting a theory of translation along these lines, we need to examine more closely what it means to say that an utterance interpretively resembles an original.

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1 Sperber and Wilson mention translation in passing, suggesting that it is some kind of interpretive use, involving resemblance in semantic structure (1986a, p. 228), or logical form (1988a, p. 136). While such resemblance plays a role (cf. esp. chapter 6, section 3 below), more is involved. One reason is that the logical form does not comprise all aspects of linguistically determined meaning. These other aspects will be discussed at greater length in chapter 6.

Let us look at an example. Suppose that at a linguistic conference a colleague of mine missed a particular session that I attended. So he might ask me: "What did Pike say?" At this point I obviously have a wide range of options open in answering him:

(1) I could

(a) try to summarize in a couple of sentences what I consider to be the main points of the lecture;
(b) I could try to give brief summaries of the main points of the lecture;
(c) I might just say, "Oh, it was all about discourse."
(d) I might pick out some particular topics of Pike's talk, perhaps "cohesion", and represent in some detail what he said about that, possibly adding some explanations as well.
(e) I might offer to let him read the full written version of the paper that was handed out.

What would determine which answer I chose? According to relevance theory, my answer would, as always, be determined by considerations of relevance, and specifically by my assumptions about what my communication partner might find optimally relevant. Suppose I know that my colleague is not interested in discourse analysis - that might be an occasion where I would choose to reply with something like (1)(c). On the other hand, I might judge that my colleague would be interested in "cohesion", though he might not know too much about it - in which case my reply would follow the lines of (1)(d). Or, if I thought my colleague was very interested in almost anything that Pike said in his presentation, I would perhaps choose option (1)(e).

Thus the search for optimal relevance would constrain me to express myself so that with minimal processing effort my partner can derive information that is adequately relevant to him. And since his question was about what someone else said, that is, since I was engaged in interpretive use, there would be a strong expectation that the information conveyed by my answer would resemble what Pike was talking about rather than, for example, what Chomsky said or what I thought.

Put more generally, in interpretive use the principle of relevance comes across as a presumption of optimal resemblance: what the reporter intends to convey is (a) presumed to interpretively resemble the original - otherwise this would not be an instance of interpretive use - and (b) the resemblance it shows is to be consistent with the presumption of optimal relevance, that is, is presumed to have adequate contextual effects without gratuitous processing effort. This notion of optimal resemblance seems to capture well the idea of faithfulness, and Sperber and Wilson have, in fact, stated that in interpretive use "... the speaker guarantees that her utterance is a faithful enough representation of the original: that is, resembles it closely enough in relevant respects." (Wilson and Sperber, 1988a, p. 137)[2]

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2 Three clarifications seem to be in order here. First, strictly speaking, we are talking here about instances of "(at least) second-degree interpretations" (Sperber and Wilson, 1986a, 238) since "... every utterance is an interpretive expression of a thought of the speaker's" (1986a, p. 231), as we pointed out in ch. 2, section 4.2. However, nothing crucial for our argument depends on this matter, and this looser use, which is also employed by Sperber and Wilson, simplifies the exposition. Secondly, on the view I proposed above, the notion of faithfulness itself already implies adequacy. Thus one could simply speak of an utterance as being "faithful" rather than "faithful enough". Thirdly, the use of the term "guaran-

This means that within the framework of relevance theory, the treatment of translation as interlingual interpretive use brings with it a ready-made notion of faithfulness, thus obviating the need to develop such a notion separately.

An important question is, of course, whether this general notion of faithfulness will be useful for translation. More specifically, is not this notion of faithfulness too vague to be useful - after all, "close enough resemblance in relevant respects" does not seem to determine anything very concrete.

The answer is, of course, that both the content and the form of the translation are heavily constrained by considerations of relevance: Thus if we ask in what respects the intended interpretation of the translation should resemble the original, the answer is: in those respects that make it adequately relevant to the audience - that is, that offer adequate contextual effects; if we ask how should the translation be expressed, the answer is: it should be expressed in such a manner that it yields the intended interpretation with minimal effort, that is, does not require any unnecessary processing effort on the part of the audience. Hence considerations of relevance constrain both the interpretation of the translation and the way it is expressed, and since consistency with the

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tee" is open to misinterpretation: as Sperber and Wilson point out elsewhere, the principle of relevance does not entail that the communication will always succeed - the utterance may not live up to the guarantee (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1986a, pp. 158ff). With regard to interpretive use, this means that what is given by the speaker is better described as a *presumption* of faithfulness rather than a guarantee.

principle of relevance is always context-dependent, these constraints, too, are context-determined.

Thus, in any given case, the goal of successful communication requires the translator to produce a receptor language text such that its interpretation resembles the interpretation of the original in those assumptions that make it adequately relevant to the receptor language audience and to express himself in such a way that these assumptions are recoverable by the receptors without unnecessary processing effort.

These conditions seem to provide exactly the guidance that translators and translation theorists have been looking for: they determine in what respects the translation should resemble the original - only in those respects that can be expected to make it adequately relevant to the receptor language audience. They determine also that the translation should be clear and natural in expression in the sense that it should not be unnecessarily difficult to understand.

Let us test this account of faithfulness by applying it to a number of examples, and by comparing it to some of the rules and principles that have been advocated to achieve faithfulness in translation.

2 Faithfulness in interlingual interpretive use

Let us begin with an example from the sphere of literary translation. Adams talks here about the problem *of* mismatches in grammatical categories between languages, the case in point being that of the distinction between *vous* and *tu* in French, which is not available in contemporary English:

> "At a climactic moment in Stendhal's *Le rouge et le noir* (Book II, chap. 19), Julien Sorel, after weeks of solitary suffering, has finally climbed back into Mathilde de la Mole's good graces, and so undertakes once more the perilous ascent, via a ladder, to her midnight bedroom. She receives him with ecstatic, unbounded delight, crying, 'C'est donc toi!' And just here C. K. Scott-Moncrieff - for whose extraordinary gifts as a translator I have, as a general rule, only the highest respect - slips on the insidious banana peel, and translates, 'So it is thou!' What girl of high social rank and free social manners ever greeted a lover that way?" (Adams 1973, p. 14)

To give an adequate account of this example, we will need to look at it from two perspectives. Firstly, from the perspective of the translator, can the notion of interlingual interpretive use explain why Scott-Moncrieff should have chosen such a rendering? Secondly, from Adams's perspective - can our account explain why he should find it unsatisfactory?

Let us look at it first from the translator's perspective. In view of Adams's high regard for Scott-Moncrieff's abilities it seems out of the question that - like a student in a beginner's class on translation - the translator simply looked into an English dictionary to find a pronoun corresponding in semantic meaning to French *tu* and then put it into the translation, without being aware of its associations.

Neither does it seem completely adequate to me to dismiss this matter as a kind of slip-up, as Adams seems to suggest. It seems improbable, though not altogether impossible, that a form as uncommon in contemporary English as *thou* would slip into the text unnoticed: such an explanation would have seemed appropriate had the transla-

tor used *you*. So there is reason to assume that this was a deliberate choice on the translator's part.[3]

On this assumption, then, Scott-Moncrieff must have considered his rendering faithful enough to the original, that is, he must have thought that its interpretation resembled the original in assumptions that would make it adequately relevant to the receptors, and, moreover, that these assumptions would be recoverable from his rendering without unnecessary processing effort.

In particular, given that *you* would have been the normal first choice, he must have intended to convey special contextual effects by using the less common, hence more costly pronominal form *thou*. The special effects he had in mind become clear when one takes a closer look at the pronominal form *tu* in the original: as part of their cultural background knowledge, the French know that the 2nd person singular form of the pronoun is used between people who have an intimate social relationship. Most likely this information is stored in the encyclopaedic entry associated with the word *tu*, and hence this information becomes highly accessible whenever *tu* or one of its inflected forms is used.[4] Due to its high accessibility it can give rise to quite manifest contextual implications: in this case, that there was an intimate relationship between Mathilde and Julien, a significant implicature at this point.

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3 If it was not a deliberate choice but a slip-up due to temporary lack of attention, then this phenomenon does not belong in an account of communication but rather in an account of psychological errors.
4 For further information about encyclopaedic entries and the organisation of information in memory see chapter 6, section 3.

We can see, then, a possible reason why the translator should have chosen *thou* rather than *you* in English: *you*, being indeterminate between singular and plural, could not have yielded this implicature about the intimate nature of the relationship between these two characters, and so his choice was intended to preserve this implicature for his readers.

But why does Adams regard this solution as faulty rather than successful? He explains:

"'Thee' and 'thou' belong, for most people, to obsolete or ecclesiastical language; intimacy is the feeling these terms preeminently *don't* express." (1973, p. 14; italics as in original)

Adams's evaluation touches on three distinct points: a) on the audience envisaged, b) on what *thou* does convey to them, and c) on what it doesn't convey.

Let us begin with the question of audience. Adams argues in terms of "most people", which probably must be interpreted as "most English readers who would be interested in literature of this kind". If this is right, then his further claim is that for such readers *thou* belongs to "obsolete or ecclesiastical language". In terms of relevance theory this means that the encyclopaedic entry associated with *thou* contains the information that it is a word no longer used, except in certain religious contexts. Note that there is no significant difference in semantic meaning: both *tu* and *thou* semantically represent a single addressee.

Conversely, the encyclopaedic entry associated with *thou* does *not* contain any information about it being appropri-

ate as a form of address between people with a close social relationship. This information is not present there with "most people".

However, there is one more factor we need to consider, and that is processing effort. Not only does *thou* have information associated that classifies it as "obsolete or ecclesiastical" - it is also likely that rare lexical forms like this one are stored in less accessible places in memory. Hence such unusual forms require more processing effort, and given that the communicator would have had available a perfectly ordinary alternative, *you*, the audience will rightly expect special contextual effects, special pay-off, from the use of this more costly form.

It is, therefore, not only the mismatch in associated information, but also the increase in processing cost that is responsible for the infelicity of this translation. It makes the audience look for special contextual effects, hence makes it willing to pay special attention not only to the semantics but, for example, to information associated with the word itself. Since that information differs from that in the original, the audience may be misled toward unintended contextual implications.

Note, however, that here the interpretation the audience will arrive at need not necessarily be, for example, that Mathilde used obsolete language with Julien. The reason is that it is not the first interpretation that comes to mind that the audience is entitled to take as the intended interpretation, but rather the first interpretation that comes to mind *and* is consistent with the principle of relevance. In other words, the reader usually tries to "make sense" of what he reads, and it would probably be difficult to make sense of an interpretation that suggested the use of either archaic or religious

forms of language at this point in the story. This means that this interpretation would run into problems: there would be no obvious way in which this interpretation could have been intended to yield a significant number of contextual implications, that is, in which it would "make sense" in this context.

At this point in the interpretation process the audience could react in different ways: it could, for example, assume that there is something wrong with the translation. In this case, it could, for example, leave the matter unresolved and go on reading, or - especially if this is not the first point of difficulty - perhaps break off the interpretation process altogether, that is, discard that translation.

Alternatively, it could assume that there is in fact an interpretation consistent with the principle of relevance, though one involving a higher investment in processing cost. Consequently, the reader would try to expand the context further in order to gain an adequate return in terms of contextual implications. The results this would lead to would depend crucially on what knowledge the reader has, on his intellectual powers, experience with interpretation of literature and so forth. An imaginative reader may perhaps suspect some irony here and would consequently misinterpret this passage, especially if he did not have access to the original.

But it is also possible that the reader is one of those "semilanguaged" people that Adams (1973, p. xii) talks about in the preface to his book, that is, a person less than fully bilingual with the original language, but with some knowledge of it. Such a person might extend his context to include the recognition that he is reading a translation from French, which might lead to a further

extension that brings in knowledge of French. Thus he might realize that English *thou* stands for French *tu*, which might make accessible the knowledge of the social conventions relating to the use of *tu*, which would enable him to derive contextual implications about the degree of intimacy that seems to obtain now between Mathilde and Julien, and any further contextual implications this might have for the understanding of the novel.

Even for readers familiar with French this interpretation would be problematic, because its recovery involves considerable processing effort, and it is not clear whether many readers would have felt this extra effort worth the benefits obtained, especially since the non-sensical impressions of ecclesiastical and archaic usage would be quite strongly manifest. This could explain Adams's judgment of the infelicitous nature of this rendering.

Thus we see that we can account for the problems of communication encountered in this example in terms of interlingual interpretive use: for the audience represented by Adams - which is probably the majority - Scott-Moncrieff's rendering here falls short both in closeness of resemblance and in adequate relevance.

This example involves problems of resemblance on a point of stylistic detail. By way of contrast let us now look at a translation where there is concern about resemblance in much more fundamental respects.

The example I want to look at concerns Levý's (1969) discussion of how a particular poem by Morgenstern could or should be translated into English.

> "In Christian Morgenstern's poem "The aesthetic weasel", in the verses

Ein Wiesel
sass auf einem Kiesel
inmitten Bachgeriesel

[A weasel
sat on a pebble
in the midst of a ripple of a brook;
translation from Levý (1967)[5]]

the playful rhyme is more essential than the zoological and topographic exactness, for Morgenstern himself adds

Das raffinier-
te Tier
Tat's um des Reimes Willen.

[The shrewd
animal
did it for the sake of the rhyme.
translation my own]

Max Knight translates,

A weasel
perched on an easel
within a patch of teasel

and adds in the preface quite rightly that other translations would be equally possible:

A ferret
nibbling a carrot
in a garret

or

A mink
sipping a drink
in a kitchen sink

or

A hyena
playing a concertina
in an arena

or

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5 Levý (1967) uses the same example (pp. 1178f)

A lizard
shaking its gizzard
in a blizzard

> More important than the individual meanings in detail is here the preservation of the play on words." (1969, pp. 103f; translation my own[6])

This example is particularly interesting because it is presented by Levý as an illustration of one of the most basic problems of translation: what the translator should do when he cannot possibly preserve *all* the features of the original:

> "In translation there are situations which do not allow one to capture all values of the original. Then the translator has to decide which qualities of the original are the most important and which ones one could miss out. The problem of the reliability of translation consists partly in that the relative importance of the values in a piece of literature are recognized." (Levý 1969, p. 103)

The "values" among which the translator has to choose are described by Levý in terms of "semantic functions":

> "... in Morgenstern's text some words have two semantic functions: 1. their own denotative meaning, 2. a function in a structure of a higher order (and just this was retained in the translation)." (1969, p. 104)

The words in question are *Wiesel, Kiesel* and *Bachgeriesel*. Their approximate denotations are 'weasel', 'pebble' and 'ripple of a brook'. Their "higher" semantic

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6 Quotations from Levý (1969) are given in my own translation, unless indicated otherwise.

functions are that they establish the rhyming pattern of this poem, more particularly the pattern of the "Kalauer", a kind of pun.[7]

The problem is, of course, that while English has ways of expressing these denotations and also of rhyming, it so happens that it does not offer a set of words or expressions that fulfil both conditions at once: that is, that both have these denotations *and* rhyme. Therefore the translator has to make a choice about what properties he wants to preserve.

Levý proposes that this choice follows from a "functional hierarchy" (cf. chapter 1, section 2.3.2.3) that determines the relative ranking of importance of various aspects of word meaning:

> "In general, one can say that with words that have several expressive functions, the function in the semantic complex of the higher order is the more important one, be it the context (the sentence, the paragraph etc.), be it the character of a person, the fable or the philosophical objective of a work. The highest complex of expression, sometimes referred to as the idea of the work, its world view, dominates the solution of problems in some lower unit, e.g. when choosing the stylistic level, and this in turn determines the solution of problems of detail." (Levý 1969, pp. 104f; reproduced here for convenience from p. 28 above)

The particular "hierarchy" Levý proposes for this example looks as follows:

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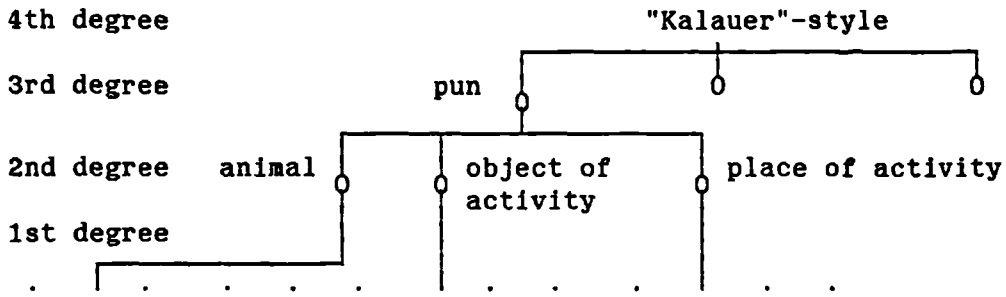
7 *Kalauer* is a colloquial term and refers to a 'simple, funny pun' ["einfaches, witziges Wortspiel"; R. Klappenbach and W. Steimitz (eds) (1969), *Wörterbuch der deutschen Gegenwartsprache*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin, p. 2016].

Diagram 2



Ein Wiesel saß auf einem Kiesel inmitten Bachgeriesel
(1969, p. 104)

Levý claims that while the translations differ in their concrete semantic content, they converge in preserving the agreement in rhyme between words that correspond to each other with regard to their "functions" at the second level of abstraction; thus they preserve the agreement of rhyme of "... 1. the name of the animal, 2. the object to which its activity is geared, 3. the location. In all five translations it is only these three abstract functions of the three individual verses that are preserved and not the concrete meanings of the individual words" (1969, p. 104).

As an account of how the translator is to make his decisions, this approach raises a number of questions. Perhaps the most obvious one concerns the nature of the "functional hierarchy" itself: as we already remarked about hierarchical functions in general (cf. chapter 1), it is not at all clear on what principles Levý's hierarchy is constructed: the lowest level seems to consist of the actual words of the text, the second level of some semantic abstracts: "animal", "object", and "location". This already raises a number of questions, one of which is how one determines what kind of abstract notions would occur here? For example, it seems that the phrase "auf einem Kiesel" 'on a pebble' is abstracted as "object" and

the phrase "inmitten Bachgeriesel" 'in the midst of a running stream' as "location" ["Schauplatz"]. However, the fact is that *both* phrases refer to locations. But if this is the case, that is, if the 2nd degree of abstraction refers to "animal", "location" and "location", then *none* of the four alternatives would meet Levý's requirement of preserving the abstract functions correctly - only the first one would.

Furthermore, levels three and four of the hierarchy seem to belong to a different domain altogether: they do not naturally follow on from level two, presenting perhaps a further degree of abstraction along semantic lines, but belong to the domain of stylistics, distinguishing as they do between 'pun' and '"Kalauer"-style'. Thus the overall organisation of this hierarchy remains unclear.

So the general question is: how can the translator know what the proper representation of the text is at any higher level of function? Levý does not answer these questions, yet without an answer the appeal to function only serves to replace the translator's question "what features should I preserve?" by another set of questions, such as "what abstract functions are there in the text?" and "what is the functional hierarchy that determines their relative value?". Since the answer to these questions can depend on text-external features, such as purpose of communication, audience etc., it is doubtful that adequate "functional hierarchies" can be set up.

However, it seems more than doubtful anyway that such "functional hierarchies" play any *significant* role here at all. What is actually being done here can not only be *accounted for* in terms of relevance, but can also be *evaluated* in those terms. Thus according to our account, a translation of Morgenstern's poem will come with the

presumption that its interpretation resembles that of the original "closely enough in relevant respects".

This raises first of all the question of what respects of the original the receptors would be interested in. Here the translator has to make use of his knowledge of the audience: he has to make assumptions about the cognitive environment of his audience: he has to think about background knowledge that might have a bearing on the interpretation of the translation, and, in particular, he has to make assumptions about the potential relevance that any aspects of the interpretation would have for the audience, that is, about their interests.

In our example, what Levý presented as "abstract functions" are, in fact, assumptions that he believed not only to be part of the original interpretation but also of adequate relevance to the English target audience. These assumptions include the following:

(2) (a) The text constitutes a play on words.;
(b) The text refers to an animal, an object and a location at the end of each line, and the words used to refer to them rhyme;
(c) The text is of the "Kalauer" kind.

Assumptions (a) and (c) would be implicated conclusions of appropriate descriptions of the original poem, with (c) assuming knowledge of the literary category "Kalauer". The assumptions in (b) are of mixed origin: the first half of (b) would result from some analytic implications, such as "a weasel is an animal", "a pebble is an object", but the second half would again involve a description.[8]

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8 In actual fact, however, the five translations consid-

As to differences, our observation was that the abstractions "object" and "location" rather than "object" and "object" seem somewhat arbitrary. In terms of relevance theory this means that while both the original and Knight's chosen translation have "an animal did something in location X in location Y" as one of its analytic implications, the four alternative translations do not share this implication but have the following implication instead: "an animal did X in location Y". Levý does not comment on this difference.

What about Levý's suggestion that somehow the preservation of the assumptions in (2) is more important than the preservation of the fact that the animal referred to in the original was a weasel rather than a ferret or lizard, that it was perching on a pebble rather than playing a concertina or that it was in the middle of a stream rather than in a kitchen sink or arena?

I think there is a sense in which we can feel that Levý's intuition is right - how can relevance theory account for this?

We can account for this intuition if we assume that the relevance of the original lay not in the assumptions it conveyed about what a certain weasel did, that is, sat on a pebble in a stream, but rather in the assumption that the animal acted in this way with a literary motive in mind: to give rise to a rhyming poem. It is this amusing

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(continued)

ered have more in common with the original than that: they all suggest e.g. that an indefinite animal, object and location is talked about and they all show the same graphic arrangement on the page that marks them out as poems in our Western tradition.

assumption that seems to be primarily responsible for the relevance of the original, and hence Levý's intuition that this assumption is particularly important can again be accounted for in terms of relevance.

However, it should be noted that this condition - the comparative degree of relevance of a certain assumption in the original interpretation - is not a sufficient condition for its inclusion in the translation. This can be illustrated from the auxiliary translation given above in addition to Knight's renderings:

(3) "Auxiliary translation":

A weasel
sat on a pebble
in the midst of a ripple of a brook
(p. 171 above)

This translation obviously does *not* attempt to preserve the rhyme, hence would not serve well to convey the main assumption just mentioned, and yet would seem to be appropriate to our discussion. Again, this follows from our definition of faithfulness which calls for resemblance in *relevant respects*: on the assumption that some readers may not know enough German to understand the semantic content of the poem, this translation helps them by giving them easy access to the semantically determined meaning of that poem, and knowledge of the semantic meaning of the original is relevant to the overall thrust of our discussion.

Furthermore, it does not follow that preservation of those more important, "abstract" features necessarily frees the translator from the obligation to preserve any of the more "concrete" semantic properties, as Levý's

functional treatment seems to suggest by treating the four other renderings as equally possible translations. As we saw above, those four alternatives actually differ from the original in certain assumptions that they could reasonably be expected to share, as Knight's actual translation shows. Thus there is a sense in which the four alternatives differ from the original in unnecessary and rather arbitrary respects.

This intuition can be explained in terms of our relevance-based account of faithfulness: the translation is presented in virtue of its resemblance with the original - hence, other things, especially processing cost, being equal, the more closely it resembles the original, the better. However, all the four alternatives considered resemble the original less closely than they could have done as evidenced by Knight's actual translation, and hence are less faithful than that translation.

It should be noted that Knight's translation achieves this greater degree of resemblance without any loss in relevance. This is an important consideration that we tried to allude to above by the condition "other things being equal". Sometimes it is possible to achieve a higher degree of resemblance but only at the cost of a decrease in overall relevance: either because the increase in resemblance is in features not adequately relevant and/or because it involves an increase in processing cost that is not outweighed by the gains in overall relevance. Under those conditions the rendering showing less resemblance will usually be the one required for successful communication.

We have already looked at cases illustrating this point. When Scott-Moncrieff chose the rendering *thou*, he probably did so on the assumption that resemblance in the sec-

ond person singular form of the pronoun was a feature of the original worth preserving, that is, one that would have adequate contextual effects. However, what he apparently failed to consider was not only that English *thou* conveyed quite strongly features not part of the original interpretation, but also that the relevance of this increase in resemblance was actually jeopardized for many readers by the increase in processing cost that it required.

This brings out another important point: whatever decision the translator reaches is based on *his intuitions or beliefs* about what is relevant to his audience. The translator does not have direct access to the cognitive environment of his audience, he does not actually *know* what it is like - all he can have is some assumptions or beliefs about it. And, of course, as we have just seen, these assumptions may be wrong. Thus our account of translation does not predict that the principle of relevance makes all translation efforts successful any more than it predicts that all ostensive communication is successful. In fact, it does predict that failure of communication is likely to arise where the translator's assumptions about the cognitive environment of the receptor language audience are inaccurate.

Thus we see that the relevance-based account of faithfulness is not, in fact, vague at all. Since it is subject to constraints of relevance, it constrains translational faithfulness with full sensitivity to context, and yet without any need for rules and principles of translation that appeal to functional or other classificatory schemes. In fact, it seems that the bulk of rules and principles that have been advanced in writings on translation are concerned not so much with matters of general translation theory but rather spell out "rankings" of

relevance for the translator with regard to different audiences - that is, they attempt to make statements about the comparative degree of relevance that assumptions of the original interpretation are likely to achieve with certain kinds of audiences.

3 The origin of translation principles

Take, for example, the guidelines given in Beekman and Callow (1974) concerning "Lexical equivalence across languages - when things or events are unknown in the RL" (pp. 191-211). There Beekman and Callow list three main options: "equivalence by modifying a generic word", "equivalence using a loan word" and "equivalence by cultural substitution". Looking at the first option first, this involves the addition of a "descriptive modification" to a "generic term" to supply specific meaning absent from the generic term itself. One of the examples given is the following:

> "... the word *passover* has quite a few significant components of meaning, including feast, religious, Jewish, the passing over of the angel without hurting them, deliverance from Egypt, and eating sheep. However, a descriptive equivalent including all of these would be cumbersome, and in a case like this, a good equivalent can usually be arrived at which focuses on those components which are most significant to the context, leaving the others to be implied or taught. Some renditions of *passover* have been 'the feast at which they ate sheep', 'the Jewish feast about God delivering them,' and 'the feast remembering when God's angel passed by'." (Beekman and Callow 1974, p. 192)

This guideline is a straightforward application of the principle of relevance; it draws the translator's attention to the fact that, due to differences in cognitive environment, the receptor language audience may lack information associated with a concept in the original that

would be needed to convey the intended interpretation in consistency with the principle of relevance. It points out that not all the information associated with a concept in the original is equally relevant in each context and then advises him to select for his translation such information as is most relevant in that context, keeping the processing cost as low as possible at the same time.

Often the rankings provided have to do with particular sets of assumptions that are part of the receptor language audience's cognitive environment. Thus regarding "equivalence by cultural substitution" (cf. above), Beekman and Callow give the following guideline:

> "For historical references, it is inappropriate to make use of cultural substitutes, as this would violate the fundamental principle of historical fidelity." (1974, p. 203)

Thus, while unknown concepts in "didactic passages" used to illustrate a teaching point can be translated by cultural substitutes, - for example in Mark 4:21 "on a candlestick" has been rendered in Korku, an Indian language, as "on a grain bin" - this cannot be done in historical passages:

> "In Matthew 21:19-21 and Mark 11:13,14, Jesus curses a fig tree. This is again a historical incident, so the translation should refer to a fig tree, not an avocado or some other better known, local tree." (Beekman and Callow 1974, p. 203)

However, the "principle of historical fidelity" to which Beekman and Callow allude here does not follow from principles of translation theory as such, but from the high importance attached to matters of history in the Christian faith. This is why in "historical passages" the translator is advised to be content with less "dynamic" but historically more accurate renderings: for the Chris-

tian audience historical accuracy ranks higher than some savings in processing effort.

This relevance-based account of faithfulness can also account for principles of translation that recommend "explications", such as we considered in chapter 4 (section 2.2). On our account, they are motivated by the assumption that certain implicatures of the original are highly relevant to the audience, but cannot be derived by them from the semantic contents alone, due to contextual differences. Therefore the translator attempts to communicate these assumptions to the receptors as explicatures.

The same applies to guidelines given for literary translation. For example, the reason why special attention is given to the preservation of style in literary translation is not that this is a requirement of translation theory as such but that a literary audience will expect much relevance from matters of style as a consequence of the particular assumptions it holds.

The following collection of translation guidelines from Newmark shows that the same observation applies across the board to different kinds of translation:

> "A technical translator has no right to create neologisms ... , whilst an advertiser or propaganda writer can use any linguistic resources he requires. Conventional metaphors and sayings ... should always be conventionally translated (...) but unusual metaphors and comparisons should be reduced to their sense if the text has a mainly informative function ... . The appropriate equivalents for keywords ... should be scrupulously repeated throughout a text in a philosophical text. ... In a non-literary text, there is a case for transcribing as well as translating any key-word of linguistic significance, e.g. Hitler's favourite political words in Maser's biography." (Newmark 1988, p. 15)

It is not difficult to see that each of these rules is an application of the principle of relevance to an audience with particular kinds of interests.

The principle of relevance can also be seen behind guidelines given for oral translation (simultaneous interpretation). Thus Namy views "good simultaneous interpreting" as "... the art of re-expressing in one language a message delivered in another language at the same time as it is being delivered", and he stipulates that "... the re-expression should be clear, unambiguous and immediately comprehensible, that is to say, perfectly idiomatic, so that the listener does not have to mentally re-interpret what reaches him through the earphones" (1978, p. 26). To achieve such "good simultaneous translation", the oral translator "... can and, I contend, must take as much liberty with the original as is necessary in order to convey to his audience the intended meaning ... of the speaker" (Namy 1978, p. 27). Thus Namy asks rhetorically:

> "When a French Polytechnicien, addressing his American counterpart, says: 'Quelle est la proportion de main d'oeuvre indirecte que vous appliquez à l'entretien du capital installé?' should the interpreter say 'What is the proportion of indirect labour you apply to the maintenance of the fixed capital?' or should he say, 'How many people do you employ to keep the place clean and maintain the equipment?'" (Namy 1978, p. 27).

Namy's general answer is that "The interpreter should never hesitate to depart - even considerably - from the original if in doing so he makes the message more clear" (1978, p. 27). From the relevance-theoretic point of view this guideline is motivated by the fact that the translation will be taken up aurally. Since the stream of speech flows on, the audience cannot be expected to sit and ponder difficult renderings - otherwise it will lose the subsequent utterances; hence it needs to be able to

recover the intended meaning instantly. Accordingly, the translator will settle for renderings that resemble the original less closely but get across easily what he considers to be adequately relevant aspects of the original.[9]

While our interest here is not so much with the history of translation and translation theories, it is tempting to suggest that diachronically, too, the different ways in which people have translated at different times in history can also be attributed to differences in what the translator believed to be relevant to his contemporary audience. Thus Bassnett-McGuire (1980) suggests that the adjustments made, for example, by Wyatt should not be simply discarded as 'adaptations' but be seen as attempts at relating the meaning of a poem to the readers of the time. Taking from Wyatt's translation of Petrarch's sonnet a few lines that deal with the death of Cardinal Giovanni Colonna and of Laura in AD 1348, she points out that the changes made by the translator indicate that "... the translator has opted for a voice that will have immediate impact on contemporary readers as being of their own time" (p. 57), allowing them perhaps even to relate it to the downfall of Cromwell in AD 1540.[10] Put

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9 The importance of the time factor with regard to relevance has been pointed out by Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 160.

10 Wyatt's translation reads as follows:
The pillar pearished is whearto I lent;
The strongest staye of myne unquyet mynde:
(CCXXXVI)

The original reads:
Rotta è l'alta colonna e'l verde lauro
Che facean ombra al mio stanco pensero; (CCLXIX)

This is translated by Bassnett-McGuire as:
"Broken is the tall column (Colonna) and the green laurel tree (Laura)
That used to shade my tired thought" (1980, p. 57).

in terms of relevance theory this would mean that Wyatt focused on bringing out those assumptions from the original interpretation that would readily yield contextual effects in the cognitive environment he shared with his target audience.

In each case, the actual "translation principle" is the same: do what is consistent with the search for optimal relevance. What differs are the specific applications of this principle that take into account the different "rankings" of relevance that exist in different cognitive environments.

Once this is recognized one can see why so much of the literature on translation is useful, and yet only in a limited way: it is extremely useful in making the translator sensitive to the importance of the assumptions present in the cognitive environment in which he produces his translation, not only with regard to the content of the text to be translated, but also with regard to the whole act of communication in which he is involved. On the other hand, the usefulness of such guidelines is limited in that they are only applications of the principle of relevance that rely on generalizations about classes of texts, situations, purposes, translations etc.. To the degree that such classifications can never be wholly adequate, these guidelines, too, are only approximations, and their value derives from the principle of relevance - they have no intrinsic value of their own.

This is a major reason why in many cases translation principles and rules either need to be constantly modified or else seem to contradict one another. For example, according to de Waard and Nida one of the condi-

tions under which "... changes of form can and should be made" (1986, p. 37) in translation is "... when a formal correspondence involves a serious obscurity in meaning" (1986, p. 38) - but at the same time they give the following exception to this rule:

> "On the other hand, there are certain important religious symbols which, though often obscure in their meaning, are necessarily important for the preservation of the integrity and unity of the biblical message", e.g. expressions like "Lamb of God", "cross" or "sacrifice" (1986, p. 38).

A similar case is found in Hofmann's treatment of drama translation. Hofmann proposes a trichotomous model, involving the "expressive level", the "content level" and the "pragmatic level" (1980, p. 28). In view of the special requirements in drama, he holds the view that pragmatics embraces "... purpose and objective of the translation", and "... opens up for the receptor the ... components of cognitive understanding and aesthetic pleasure, the challenging nature and effectiveness on stage" (1980, p. 37). Hofmann therefore declares the pragmatic aspects to be an invariant, not a variable in drama translation:

> "From the well-known fact that e.g. philological reliability, i.e. literal formal and/or semantic invariance, does not always equal theatrical reliability *it must be concluded that the variable pragmatics, here its component 'effectiveness on stage', is raised to an invariant.*" (p. 37; translation and emphasis my own)

Hofmann further supports his position by reference to other translation theorists; he names Kloepfer, Levý, Vinay, Reiss and quotes Mounin "... who presents the demand for this invariance in a particularly rigid way:

> 'Prior to faithfulness to the wording, to grammar, to syntax and even to the style of each individual sentence in the text must be faithfulness to that which made this piece a success in its original

> country. One has to translate its effectiveness on stage first before giving consideration to the reproduction of its literary or poetic qualities, and if in this conflicts should arise, then priority must be given to the effectiveness on stage.'" (Mounin 1967, p. 137; Hofmann 1980, p. 27; translation my own)

However, despite this strong commitment to pragmatics and effectiveness on stage, when it comes, for example, to the treatment of symbolisms in drama, Hofmann sees the need to make exceptions. Because of the potential relevance of these symbolisms for possible film-productions of the drama in question "... all verbalized emblems should be retained in the translation, too", even though this will mean that "... as a rule, the recipient will - in spite of possible iconic functional actions - remain on the level of understanding of a Claudius ("I have nothing with this answer", *Hamlet,* III, ii, 93) or Rosencrantz (I understand you not, my lord, *Hamlet,* IV, ii, 21) ..." (Hofmann 1980, p. 66).

A last example may be taken from Levý (1969). The author sees an important difference between the translation of measures and weights on the one hand, and that of currencies on the other. He claims that unfamiliar measures can be converted into "metres and kilograms" because the reader may have no idea of the content of less familiar foreign measuring units. Regarding currencies, however, Levý makes the following claim:

> "Foreign currencies cannot be converted because a currency is always specific to a certain country and the use of *Mark* would localize the translation in Germany." (p. 97)

However, this distinction between weights and measures versus currencies does not seem to be so general after all, when one reads a little later that "... one will, for example, keep foreign measures, weights and curren-

cies in a report of travels [Reisebeschreibung], but in the English verses 'When first my way to fair I took, Few pence in purse had I' one will be able to translate as 'ein paar Heller (Groschen) hatte ich'" (196, p. 107).

This last example comes close to a contradiction. Such contradiction can be seen even more clearly when one compares the principles of translation held by different translators and translation theorists, a situation which led Savory (1957) to write that "It would almost be true to say that there are no universally accepted principles of translation, because the only people qualified to formulate them have never agreed among themselves, but have so often and for so long contradicted each other that they have bequeathed to us a welter of confused thought which must be hard to parallel in other fields of literature." (p. 49)

Savory then follows this claim up with his widely-quoted list of pair-wise contradictory translation principles:

> "1. A translation must give the words of the original.
> 2. A translation must give the ideas of the original.
> 3. A translation should read like an original work.
> 4. A translation should read like a translation.
> 5. A translation should reflect the style of the original.
> 6. A translation should possess the style of the translator.
> 7. A translation should read as a contemporary of the original.
> 8. A translation should read as a contemporary of the translator.
> 9. A translation may add to or omit from the original.
> 10. A translation may never add to or omit from the original.
> 11. A translation of verse should be in prose.
> 12. A translation of verse should be in verse." (1957, p. 49)

Savory's attempt to resolve these paradoxes by his concept of "reader-analysis" is a step in the right direction, but it still misses the crucial point. The link between different readerships and the need for different translations lies in the principle of relevance. While one could try to resolve the paradoxes by spelling out in more detail what features of the original should be preserved under which circumstances in terms of readership, text-type etc., this will only lead to greater complexity, without getting to the core of the problem. We have not addressed all the various aspects of translation to which Savory's statements refer yet, but even at this stage it is not difficult to see that these contradictions can be resolved by qualifying each principle with the crucial condition "... when required for consistency with the principle of relevance".

4 Conclusion

Thus it seems that an account of translation as interlingual interpretive use has much to commend it. In fact, it could be said to achieve what translation theory has been attempting to do for a long time - that is, to develop a concept of faithfulness that is generally applicable and yet both text- and context-specific. It is generally applicable in that it involves only notions believed to be part of general human psychology - the principle of relevance and the ability to engage in interpretive use. It is text-specific in that interpretive use will link the communicative intention of the translator to the intended interpretation of the original text. It is context-specific in that the search for consistency with the principle of relevance always brings in the particular cognitive environment of the audience addressed. All this is achieved without recourse to typologies of texts, communication acts and the like.

Note that the resulting notion of translation can also be distinguished clearly from non-translation: as we saw in chapter 3, instances of descriptive use across language boundaries would be excluded, as would instances of interpretive use not involving two languages.[11] It would even offer the basis for a principled distinction between translation and paraphrase, if one defined paraphrases as those instances of interlingual interpretive use that failed to confirm the presumption of optimal relevance, as discussed in some of the examples above.

Furthermore, it seems that an account of translation as interlingual interpretive use is also able to do justice to the historical dimension of translation addressed by Kelly in the following words:

> "If a comprehensive theory be possible, it must seek the essential harmony between the practice of all ages and genres, and give a satisfactory analysis of differences." (1979, p. 227)

However, the very flexibility of this notion will no doubt be felt objectionable by some who would not feel comfortable in allowing summaries as well as elaborated

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11 Of course, the notion of "two languages" introduces a certain amount of fuzziness into the concept, given the notorious sociolinguistic problems surrounding the notion of "language" itself. However, note that this particular problem would not have any bearing on the interpretation process or its result, since those are only determined by the notion of interpretive use. In other words, while one may disagree as to whether a rendering of a text from a Bavarian dialect in High German is a translation, on the grounds that the two language varieties are perhaps viewed as "dialects" rather than "languages", this does not make any difference to the comprehension of the contents of the "translation" in High German, as long as the reader is a competent speaker of High German.

versions to qualify as translation. An advocate of this opinion would be Newmark (1988), who sees such practices as instances of "restricted translation" which fall outside the scope of translation theory proper:

> "There are also other restricted methods of translation: information translation, ranging from brief abstracts through summaries to complete reproduction of content without form." (p. 12)

Newmark also lists here a wide variety of other kinds of "restricted translation", such as "plain prose translation (as in Penguins)", "interlinear translation", "formal translation, for nonsense poetry (Morgenstern) and nursery rhymes", and so forth (1988, p. 12). Having presented this list, Newmark concludes: "Translation theory, however, is not concerned with restricted translation." (1988, p. 12)[12]

And intuitively there seems to be something right about the desire to distinguish between translations where the translator is free to elaborate or summarize and those where he has to somehow stick to the explicit contents of

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12 The reason why Newmark sees these varieties of "restricted translation" as excluded from a general theory of translation is interesting: "Whilst principles have been, and will be, proposed for dealing with recurrent problems ('translation rules'), a general theory cannot propose a single method (e.g. dynamic equivalence), but must be concerned with the full range of text-types and their corresponding translation criteria, as well as the major variables involved." (1988, p. 12)

There is a sense in which Newmark seems right. Given that what he is looking for is "a method" of translation, i.e. a body of "translation rules", he is very likely right: it seems unlikely that along these lines a single method can take care of all cases. However, looked at from the point of view of relevance theory, the notion of interpretive use would cover virtually all the varieties of translation Newmark lists.

the original. Let us therefore consider whether relevance theory can help us to explicate this intuition and perhaps provide a notion of translation that will do justice to it.

Chapter 6

Translating what was expressed

1 Style - the importance of the way thoughts are expressed

As pointed out at the end of chapter 5, it may be felt by some that translation as interlingual interpretive use allows for too much variation. This may be so especially for those who are interested not only in *what* the original writer intended to convey, but also in *how* he conveyed it, that is, in the style of the original.

This wider, stylistic dimension of communication is, of course, of special interest to literary studies, and so it is not surprising that theorists concerned with literary translation have paid considerable attention to the preservation of the stylistic properties of texts:

> "Style is the essential characteristic of every piece of writing, the outcome of the writer's personality and his emotions at the moment, and no single paragraph can be put together without revealing in some degree the nature of its author." (Savory 1957, p. 54)

Without wanting to embark here on the adventure of defining "style", there is probably sufficient agreement on the fact that style is, in some sense, the way the writer or speaker expresses himself - resulting, for example,

from the words he chooses or the way he constructs his sentences.[1]

The following example from Savory, set up by him in terms of a comparison between "the Modernizer" and "the Hellenizer", illustrates this concern for the preservation of stylistic features in translation:

> "The Greek of St. Luke viii,8, reads:
>
> kai heteron epesen epi teen geen teen agatheen
> [and other it-fell on the ground the good]
>
> for which the Authorized Version has 'And other fell on good ground'. This is a Modernizer's translation, giving good, plain English. A Hellenizer would feel that the characteristic way in which the adjective *agatheen* followed the noun *geen* was lost. St. Luke had not written *epi teen agatheen geen*, he had written words which had a slightly different emphasis on the adjective - 'on ground which was good', or something like this. A Hellenizer would try to express the distinction; whether he would succeed is another matter." (1957, p. 63f; gloss my own)

The preservation of such stylistic features is felt to be desirable because it gives a more accurate representation of the original:

> "One of the reasons for a preference for a literal translation is that it is likely to *come nearer to the style of the original*. It ought to be more accurate; and any copy, whether of a picture or poem, is likely to be judged by its accuracy." (Savory 1957, p. 54; emphasis my own)

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1 I do not attempt to define the notion of 'style' because it seems to refer to a variety of different properties of utterances that do not form a homogeneous domain. As we shall see in this chapter, relevance theory deals with these various aspects without needing to invoke a distinct notion of 'style'.

But this is, of course, where the problems begin, as Savory himself points out in the very next sentence:

> "Yet it is a fact that in making the attempt to reproduce the effect of the original, too literal a rendering is a mistake ..." (1957, pp. 54f)

Chukovskii's (1984) chapter "Imprecise precision" is devoted to this very dilemma: that the translator should be precise - but that the wrong kind of precision is disastrous for the translation:

> "A precise, literal copy of a poetic work is the most imprecise and false of all translations. The same can be said of translations of artistic prose." (p. 49)

As an example, he cites the Russian translation of Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* by Evgeny Lann:

> "... although each line of the original text is reproduced with mathematical precision, not a trace has survived of Dickens's youthful, sparkling, stormy hilarity." (Chukovskii 1984, p. 51)

Unfortunately, despite its disastrous effects, it seems very difficult to deal with this kind of wrong precision in translation:

> "Lexical discrepancies are very easily caught. If the original says 'lion' and the translation has 'dog', it is obvious the translator made a mistake. But if the translator misconstrues not individual words and phrases, but the basic coloration of an entire piece, if he offers safe and hackneyed verses instead of explosive, innovatively bold verses, sugary phrases in place of ardent ones, halting instead of flowing syntax - we are almost powerless to convince the ordinary reader a fraud has been foisted on him." (Chukovskii 1984, p. 48)

A little further on the author calls this kind of translation "slander", adding:

> "But there is nothing more difficult than exposing this kind of slander, because it is stated not in

> words or phrases but in elusive tonalities of speech for which no methods of definition have yet been worked out." (Chukovskii 1984, p. 48))

Quotations from the literature that address these very problems could be multiplied, because this is one of the central questions of literary translation: when faithfulness in matters not only of content but also of style is demanded of a translator - what should he be faithful to? Can relevance theory as an explicit theory of communication provide new insights into these problems?

2 Direct quotation, communicative clues, and direct translation

When we are concerned with preserving not only what someone meant, but also the way it was expressed we seem to be touching on the difference between direct and indirect speech quotations in intralingual communication; after all, direct speech quotations preserve exactly what was *said* and indirect speech quotations give an indication of what was *meant*. Indirect speech quotation seems to fall naturally under interpretive use, and so in a way we might say that the account of translation as interlingual interpretive use considered in the last chapter is the interlingual parallel to indirect quotation. By analogy, then, what we are looking for now is an interlingual parallel to direct quotation.

One of the first issues to discuss here is, of course, what direct speech quotations are.

It seems that the notion of direct speech quotation can be derived from the nature of stimuli used in communication; in relevance theory such stimuli are defined as follows:

> "A stimulus is a phenomenon designed to achieve cognitive effects." (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 153)

Now phenomena here are understood to be "perceptible objects or events" (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 40), and they achieve the desired cognitive effects in virtue of the properties they have.

This means, then, that stimuli can be looked at from two different points of view. They can be looked at from the point of view of the cognitive effects they have - for example, what explicatures and/or implicatures they convey, but they can also be looked at from the point of view of the intrinsic properties they have as phenomena, and this is the perspective that seems to be relevant to direct quotation, for, as Wilson and Sperber (1988a) state, "Direct quotations are chosen not for their propositional form but for their superficial linguistic properties" (p. 137).

Thus, whereas indirect quotations depend on resemblance in cognitive effects, direct quotations depend on resemblance in linguistic properties. When a speaker produces a direct quotation, he reproduces the original stimulus with its various linguistic properties:

(1) (a) Bob: I will be there at five o'clock exactly.
(b) Margaret to Jane: When did Bob say he would come?
(c) Jane: He said he'd come at five.
(d) Jane: He said, 'I will be there at five o'clock exactly'

Here (1)(c) is obviously an indirect quotation, resembling the original (1)(a) in its propositional content

and implicatures but differing almost completely in actual linguistic properties; in (1)(d), however, Jane reproduces the original with all its linguistic detail: the same syntactic construction, the same semantic representation, the same lexical items, and so forth.[2]

Returning to translation, the obvious problem is that in translation we need to talk about resemblances between texts and utterances that belong to *different languages*. While there is a certain consensus that it is often possible to achieve a fairly good degree of resemblance in semantic representation across languages, the same cannot be said of stylistic properties, which often consist in linguistic features that are far from universal. Thus it would be impossible for languages that lack the phonological property of focal stress or the syntactic category of passive to resemble utterances of English in these properties.

However, a moment's thought will reveal that the point of preserving stylistic properties lies not in their intrinsic value, but rather in the fact that they provide *clues* that guide the audience to the interpretation intended by the communicator. We shall refer to such clues as *communicative clues*. Taking up the example of focal stress, its communicative value is that it draws the audience's attention to that part of the utterance that is most relevant, that is, intended to make the greatest contribution to contextual effects.

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2 Note that some phonetic variation, at least, is generally permissible; for example, one does not usually reproduce idiosyncratic or dialectal peculiarities of pronunciation, though on occasion this may be desirable. This seems to indicate that even direct quotations are subject to considerations of relevance.

(2) (a) The DEALER stole the money.

(b) The dealer STOLE the money.

In English it does so in virtue of the fact that "different stress assignments induce different focal scales" (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 208) - that is, they determine the order in which the analytic "background" implications are considered, where a "background" implication is an analytic implication obtained by replacing the focal constituent with a semantic variable. Thus the first "background" implications of (2)(a) and (b) respectively are the following:[3]

(3) (a) Someone stole the money.
(b) The dealer did something to the money.

In Sperber and Wilson's (1986a) account, this function of focal stress in English is not linguistically encoded but can be explained in terms of reducing processing effort. However, as Sperber and Wilson state, in other languages the same function may well be "... taken over by some purely linguistic device, syntactic, morphological or intonational ..." (p. 262, note 16).

So for example, while in some of the Ethio-Semitic languages stress cannot be used to achieve these focal effects, syntactic clefting can be used for this purpose, as in these sentences from the Silt'i language:[4]

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3 For a detailed account of this see Sperber and Wilson 1986a, pp. 202-217.
4 Doubly written letters represent phonemically long segments; /k'/ stands for the velar ejective. For further details on the phonology of the language see Gutt (1983). DEF represents the definite marker, OBJ the object suffix, and REL the relative clause marker.

(4) (a) faraankay yasarak'ay naggaadeenii
money-OBJ-DEF REL-he-stole-it dealer-is-DEF
'It is the dealer who stole the money.'

(b) naggaadey yaashey faraankay sirak'ootin
dealer-DEF REL-he-did-it money-OBJ-DEF to-steal-is
'What the dealer did is stealing the money.'

In temporal sequence, the front-shifted relative clause would be processed first, providing the following assumption schema for (4) (a):

(5) (a) Someone stole the money.

Hence the clefting in (4)(a) would have the effect of making the same analytic implication most accessible as focal stress in the English example (2a), that is, it would provide the same clue for interpreting the Silt'i sentence as focal stress does in English. The same would apply to (4)(b).

If this were true more generally, then this notion of "clue giving" would allow us to define translation along lines parallel to direct quotation: as direct quotation calls for the preservation of all linguistic properties, so this kind of translation calls for the preservation of all communicative clues. Furthermore, again paralleling direct quotation, by preserving all the communicative clues of the original, such translation would make it possible for the receptors to arrive at the intended interpretation of the original, provided they used the contextual assumptions envisaged by the original author.

Thus in the context of our current discussion, this notion of translation seems to be attractive from two points of view. First of all, it seems to provide a fixed rather than flexible concept of translation. Secondly, this concept seems very suitable for the preservation of stylistic features in that communicative clues reflect not only the information content of what was said, but the way in which it was expressed and the special effects that such stylistic features would achieve.

In view of the close correspondence between this notion and direct quotation, we shall refer to it as *direct translation*. By extension, this offers us also a convenient term for the type defined as interlingual interpretive use in the previous chapter: we shall call it *indirect translation*.

So let us now investigate in more detail what kind of phenomena could be covered by the notion of "communicative clue" and what light it can throw on the preservation of style in direct translation.

3 Communicative clues arising from semantic representations

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986a), "Verbal communication proper begins when an utterance, ..., is manifestly chosen by the speaker for its semantic properties." (p. 178) More specifically, by a process of decoding, verbal expressions yield a semantic representation. From what we have said so far, then, one of the first concerns of the translator aiming at resemblance between stimuli will be to consider the semantic representation of the original stimulus. This might seem a rather common-place statement - do not all approaches to translation stress the importance of looking at the semantics of the text?

Two points need to be made here. Firstly, it is not necessarily true that all translation gives first priority to achieving resemblance in semantic interpretation. The "phonemic translation" of poetry discussed by Lefevere (1975) is a case in point. The example Lefevere discusses is a translation of Catullus by C. and L. Zukofsky (1969):

> "Celia and Louis Zukofsky's translation of Catullus opens with the following preface: 'This translation of Catullus follows the sound, rhythm and syntax of his Latin - tries, as is said, to breathe the 'literal' meaning with him.' Fidelity to the source text means, purely and simply, fidelity to its sound, to the near exclusion of all other elements." (Lefevere 1975, p. 19)

This approach leads to renderings like the following:

> "'T'my Thetis this Peleus incandesced fair thru his armor' corresponds to 'tum Thetidis Peleus incensus fertur amore" (Lefevere 1975, p. 20)

While this is a rather extreme and exceptional approach, there are instances where the translator feels compelled to disregard faithfulness in semantic representation in favour of other factors. Rhymed poetry is one example:

> "Rhyme imposes a constraint upon the writer, a constraint which bears most heavily on the essential feature of the translator's art, his choice of words. It is scarcely possible to find a rhymed translation of a lyric which does not contain evidence of this as shown either by the omission of something that the original author wrote, or the inclusion of something that he did not." (Savory 1957, p. 85)

Savory gives the following example:

> "Translating a Welsh poem, 'Hen Benillion,' [Mr. Oliver Edwards] wrote the line
>
> And still the crow feeds by the shore
>
> and in discussing his work, admits 'some liberty' with the crow, which in the original was tending its nest 'and won't rhyme in English.'" (Savory 1957, p. 85)

Translation of works where the playful use of language is important, such as in comics, also tends to subordinate semantic resemblance to other kinds of resemblances. Thus in the conclusion to his study of translations of the comic series *Asterix*, Grasegger[5] (1985) states:

> "The invariant element in such a transfer is evidently not the specific form nor the content, but the *idea of a play on words*, in favour of which one is often satisfied with a translation only partially equivalent in content." (p. 100)

A very clear example is the following:

(6) (a) Original: "Je me demande si nous sommes du bois dont on fait les héros?"
[Lit.: I wonder whether we are of the wood of which one makes heroes?]

(b) English translation: "I'd as lief not be here either, old bean."[a]

The English translation here does not even show partial overlap in content.

The second point to be made regarding faithfulness to the semantics is that semantic representations cannot be equated with "the meaning" of an utterance:

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5 R. Goscinny and A. Uderzo, *Le Combat des Chefs*; English translation: *Asterix and the Big Fight*; reported by Grasegger (1985, p. 70)

> "Linguistically encoded semantic representations are abstract mental structures which must be inferentially enriched before they can be taken to represent anything of interest." (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 174)

As pointed out in chapter 2, section 2, the semantic representation of an utterance forms an assumption schema (in case of linguistic ambiguity a set of assumption schemas) that needs to be developed inferentially until it yields the propositional form of the utterance that can be evaluated as true or false of some state of affairs. Thus the usefulness of these semantic representations is that they serve as "a source of hypotheses" about the communicator's intention - that is, they provide communicative clues.

One problem for the translator is that "... semantic representations of sentences are mental objects that never surface to consciousness" (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 193). What we can be aware of as human communicators is the content of the fully developed propositional form, but not of the semantic representation from which it was derived - and usually we are aware not only of the propositional form expressed by an utterance, but also of its implicatures. In short: we are not usually aware of the communicative clues provided by the semantic representation of an utterance, but only of its interpretation as a whole.

If this is true - does it not mean the end of this approach to translation? How can the translator attempt to identify entities of which he cannot become aware? The answer is that while it is true that the semantic representations themselves never surface to consciousness, hence are not open to *direct* introspection, this does not necessarily mean that the translator cannot know *anything*

about them. There are many phenomena, for example, in the physical world that we cannot have a direct awareness of. Yet we can acquire knowledge about them by drawing inferences from related phenomena of which we can be aware. In the same way, it is possible in principle to use our awareness of propositional forms to draw inferences about properties of the underlying semantic representations. And if relevance theory is right, this is, in fact, the only way for semanticists to develop their theories.[6]

However, there still is a problem here. We cannot necessarily equate our intuitions about the meaning of an utterance with the communicative clues it provides via its semantic representation - we are not usually aware of the communicative clues provided, but only of the total cognitive effect it achieves. Thus while we may feel that a translation somehow differs from the original, it may not be obvious whether this difference is due to a misrepresentation of its communicative clues or perhaps a mismatch in contextual assumptions used to interpret it. The following example may serve to illustrate this point.

Yuasa (1987) discusses the problems of translating into English a haiku by Bashō.[7] Concerning the opening word of the poem he says this:

> "The first word in the text is *furuike*, which is a compound noun consisting of the adjective *furushi* meaning 'old' and the noun *ike* meaning 'pond'. If a translator could satisfy himself with this simple explanation and end the whole matter by saying 'an old pond', his job would be easy. Somehow, however,

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6 Gutt (1987b) explores the possibilities for developing theories of linguistic semantics.
7 The text of this haiku is: *Furuike ya, kawazu tobikomu, mizu no oto.* (Yuasa 1987, p. 231) It is contained in the anthology *Haru no Hi*, 'Spring Days'.

> I found this English equivalent to *furuike* unsatisfactory, and I wondered why. First, I sensed that the English equivalent was too weak, far too abstract and general, *to convey the landscape suggested by the original word.* It is true that the original word itself is not so precise in its representational quality; it is in fact far from 'the direct treatment of the thing'. Nevertheless, I thought it was the responsibility of a translator to say more than 'an old pond' *to give a little more sense of the presence of the poet by the pond.*" (pp. 233f, emphases my own)

Yuasa's evaluation illustrates the ability to make comparative judgments about the interpretations of stimuli; note that he seems to realize that the meaning missed out was not actually part of the meaning of the original word. It also illustrates the problem of distinguishing between these different kinds of "meaning" in a generally applicable, yet explicit way. The general terms he uses - "too weak, far too abstract and general" - are too vague to identify the problem, and the specific expressions he uses address the problem in terms particular to this poem and to the situation it refers to.

From the point of view of relevance theory, it is fairly clear that the problem Yuasa is grappling with here is the fact that the meaning communicated by a text is not attributable to the stimulus alone, but results from the interaction between stimulus and cognitive environment. The average English reader will miss the impressions of the landscape of a Japanese garden and of the presence of the poet by the side of an ancient pond not necessarily because the expressions are semantically different, but because that original scenery is not part of his cognitive environment - he may never have seen it nor heard about it - and so he cannot use it to enjoy the rich interpretation it was intended to convey to the original audience.

It is interesting to note that this failure to see the interpretation as resulting from the appropriate combination of stimulus and cognitive environment leads Yuasa to a view of translation rather similar to that of the proponents of the communicative approaches. He concludes that, if possible, a translation should communicate the author-intended meaning *regardless* of differences in background knowledge between original and receptor language audience:

> "..., I thought it was the responsibility of a translator to say more than 'an old pond' to give a little more sense of the presence of the poet by the pond." (Yuasa 1987, p. 234)

And his solution seems to follow very similar lines to the "explication" strategy of the communicative approaches:

> "To give a greater sense of presence by the pond, I decided to add the word 'silence'. ... it suggests by implication the presence of a listening ear." (Yuasa 1987, p. 234)

Yuasa's evaluation illustrates well the problem of sorting out "meaning" - only too well-known to translators. What is particularly interesting for our discussion is that he seems to be sensitive to the fact that there are two different "kinds" or "degrees" of meaning. There is the meaning represented by the English expression *an old pond* - but then there seems to be another kind of meaning that, as Yuasa himself feels, "... is not so precise in its representational quality" but "... is in fact far from the direct treatment of the thing", and that is what he describes as "... the landscape suggested by the original word" and "... the presence of the poet by the pond" (Yuasa 1987, p. 234).

Here is one point where relevance theory can offer the translator significant help. It can not only make him

aware of the pervasive influence of the cognitive environment on the interpretation of the text, but also help him to distinguish between the different aspects of meaning and thus to get some orientation in the "jungle of meaning" that seems so confusing and overwhelming at times.

In terms of the example considered, the translator could first of all try to compare the original expression *furuike* and, for example, its translation 'an old pond' in terms of their respective semantic properties. As pointed out above, this is no trivial matter, but one that has to proceed by inference from the full interpretation to the characteristics of the semantic representations that gave rise to them. And though it is probably true to say that we are still a long way off an adequate theory of semantic representations, the more explicit and closer to our mental reality the semantic framework the translator uses, the better his prospects for an adequate understanding of the problem and its possible solutions.

The assumptions made by relevance theory about the nature of concepts provide a promising starting point for such an explicit and empirical framework. Thus relevance theory assumes that the concepts in our mind have three sets of information, or "entries", associated with them: a *logical entry*, an *encyclopaedic entry* and a *lexical entry*:

> "The *logical entry* for a concept consists of a set of deductive rules which apply to logical forms of which that concept is a constituent. The *encyclopaedic entry* contains information about the extension and/or denotation of the concept: that, about the objects, events and/or properties which instantiate it. The *lexical entry* contains information about the natural-language counterpart of the concept: the word or phrase of natural language

> which expresses it." (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 86)

According to relevance theory, at least part of the semantic meaning of a concept is stored in its logical entry, and consists, in fact, of the deductive rules - or meaning postulates - it contains. For example, Sperber and Wilson (1986a) suggest that the concept associated with the English word *mother* has a logical entry which contains the following deductive rule (or meaning postulate):

> *"Mother-elimination rule*
> *Input:* (X-*mother*-Y)
> *Output:* (X-female parent-Y)"
> (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 90)

The crucial point for our discussion is that these deductive rules that give the semantic meaning of a word apply automatically: the mere presence of a concept in semantic representation is sufficient for the hearer to apply all of its meaning postulates, regardless of context. This accounts for the fact that the word *mother* in English intrinsically denotes a female parent. Furthermore, logical entries are assumed to be "small, finite and relatively constant across speakers and times", and it is the state of the logical entry which reflects whether an individual has grasped a certain concept, "There is a point at which the logical entry for a concept is complete, and before which one would not say that the concept had been mastered at all" (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 88). Thus the logical entry contains information essential to that concept.

By contrast, the encyclopaedic entry contains all sorts of information that is incidental to the concept: thus the assumption that mothers do a lot of housework might be part of the encyclopaedic entry associated with the

concept "mother". However, this information would not be accessed by automatic deductive rules, hence would not be a necessary part of this concept. Encyclopaedic entries are assumed to be open-ended, allowing for the constant addition of new information; none of the information they contain is essential for mastery of the concept, nor is there a point at which an encyclopaedic entry could be said to be complete.

Returning to our example, the translator could examine his intuitions about the meaning of *furuike* in terms of a concept with logical, encyclopaedic and linguistic entries; he could ask himself what meaning elements might be part of what entry. Thus he could try to determine whether the information about "the presence of the poet by the pond" (Yuasa 1987, p. 234) is part of the logical entry of the concept associated with *furuike* or of its encyclopaedic entry. If part of the logical entry, then, given the assumptions about logical entries just considered, it should be true, for example, that any speaker of Japanese who did not recognize that this word has 'the presence of a poet by a pond' as part of its "meaning" had not, in fact, mastered that concept at all.

Not knowing Japanese, I do not know what the right answer is. However, considering Yuasa's own judgement that "the original word itself is not so precise in its representational quality", it seems more likely that here we are dealing with the kind of information that is typically part of the encyclopaedic entry of a concept: that is, information in some way associated with that concept, but not an integral part of it.

Similarly, one would suspect that the impression of a certain type of landscape that Yuasa gets from the expression *furuike* stems from the encyclopaedic entry, per-

haps from a stereotype stored there, rather than from its logical entry.

Whatever the concrete outcome for any given word, it will be of importance for the translator. The properties of a semantic representation are, at least in part, determined by the logical entries of the concepts it contains. Therefore, if resemblance in communicative clues, hence resemblance in semantic representation, is attempted, then clearly the translator must pay attention to these matters of semantics. Alternatively, if the information in question stems from the encyclopaedic entry of a concept that appears in the semantic representation, then it is part of the context and so, under the approach we are currently discussing, would fall outside the scope of a translation concerned with the preservation of communicative clues. It would be the responsibility of the audience to familiarize themselves with such information.

It seems worth pointing out that such a relevance-theoretic account has the potential of meeting one of Steiner's most serious criticisms of translation theory:

> "... the debate over the extent and quality of reproductive fidelity to be achieved by the translator has been philosophically naive or fictive. It has postulated a semantic polarity of 'word' and 'sense' and then argued over the optimal use of the 'space between'. ... The theory of translation, ... ought not to be held to account for having failed to solve problems of meaning, of the relations between words and the composition of the world ... . The fault, so far as the theory goes, consists of having manoeuvred *as if* these problems of relations were solved or as if solutions to them were inferentially obvious in the act of translation itself. *Praxis* goes ahead, must go ahead *as if*; theory has no licence to do so." (Steiner 1975, pp. 277f; italics as in original)

While it is true that the proposals made by Sperber and Wilson are "speculative" in some respects and "... the

boundaries between logical and encyclopaedic entries are not always easy to draw" (1986a, p. 93), the important point is that these issues have now been taken out of the realm of the philosophical and been assigned a place in cognitive science. The question of whether or not a certain piece of information is stored in the logical or encyclopaedic entry is an empirical one which, at least in principle, has an empirical answer.

Furthermore, Sperber and Wilson make clear that their account "though speculative, is as far as we know compatible with the available empirical evidence" (1986a, p. 85).[8] Thus the distinction between logical and encyclopaedic entries is bound up closely with the distinction between representation and computation - a distinction on which "... the whole framework of current cognitive psychology rests ..." (1986a, p. 89). So, despite its tentative nature, the claim that there are distinct logical and encyclopaedic entries is not "philosophically naive or fictive", but bears the mark of a serious scientific claim. It is compatible with scientific insights we currently have about the mind, and it is open to empirical falsification.

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8 For further comments on the speculative nature of the current stage of development in relevance theory see Sperber and Wilson (1987), esp. pp. 709ff.

4 Communicative clues arising from syntactic properties

Interlinear translations are probably the clearest examples of the concern to preserve certain syntactic properties of the original, such as word order and syntactic categories, with as little change as possible.[9]

However, the preservation of syntactic properties is, of course, not limited to this rather special form of translation. According to Levý, "... the literary translator is concerned with equivalents that have as many common denominators with the original as possible." (1969, p. 17; translation my own) Accordingly, the table he compiles to show by text types what properties of texts should be kept invariant indicates that, among other properties, sentence structure is to be considered invariant in the translation of literary prose and drama, blank and rhymed verse, musical texts and dubbing (1969, p. 19).[10]

The following example, involving the opening passage of Dickens' *A tale of two cities*, may serve to show the potential importance of sentence structure in translation.

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9 I shall say more about interlinear translations in chapter 7, section 3.
10 Note, though, that Savory does allow for alterations in syntactic structure in certain cases: "... it may be necessary to alter even the construction of the author's sentences in order to transfer their effects to another tongue" (1957, p. 55).

> "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going to heaven, we were all going direct the other way ..."

On this passage Chukovskii comments:

> "There is an almost poetic cadence in this excerpt. The sound symmetry conveys its ironic tone extremely well." (1984, p. 144)

By contrast, he feels that the following translation misses these effects:

> "It was the best and worst of times, it was the age of wisdom and foolishness, the epoch of unbelief and incredulity, the time of enlightenment and ignorance, the spring of hope and the winter of despair." (Bobrov and Bogoslovskaja 1957, p. 6)

Chukovskii feels that the problem is that "... [the translators] did not catch the author's intonations and thus robbed his words of the dynamism stemming from the rhythm." (1984, p. 144) Chukovskii apparently attributes the special effect achieved by the original to such structural properties as "sound symmetry" and "rhythm". While it seems unlikely that the "ironic tone" and the "dynamism" are due to actual phonological characteristics, we may be able to give an explicit account of these effects if we pay attention to the syntactic patterns involved.

Let us begin with Chukovskii's observation that there is an ironic quality to this passage. As Sperber and Wilson (1986a) have shown, irony is an instance of the *echoic* use of utterances, that is, of instances of communication

where utterances that attribute thoughts to others "... achieve relevance by informing the hearer of the fact that the speaker has in mind what so-and-so said, and *has a certain attitude to it* ..." (p. 238; emphasis my own). This seems to be the case in the passage cited. Dickens informs his readers that he has in mind a number of evaluations that people have had of the late 18th century - and crucially that he has a certain attitude to them, or at least some of them, an attitude perceived by Chukovskii as "ironic." Once this is realized, it is clear why Dickens is not seen to be contradicting himself here: he is not asserting his own beliefs, but 'echoing' those of other people.

Why does the translation cited not achieve this ironic effect? This has largely to do with the sentence structure employed in each case. Dickens uses a string of sentences in juxtaposition, the translators combined these pair-wise into single sentences with conjoined complements. This seemingly innocuous syntactic change makes a great difference to the interpretation of the two texts. Note that in both versions the reader is faced with a series of contradictory statements. In terms of the information processing that goes on in our minds, such contradictions pose a problem, and given the fact that the contradictions are obviously deliberate, the audience will look for some way of resolving them. At this point the fact that Dickens presents these contradictions in the form of pairs of independent sentences provides important communicative clues. It allows the reader to view these sentences as independent statements - which allows for the possibility that they might be "echoing" the opinions of different groups of people, that is, might be intended to represent what different people thought about those times; and this opens the way for the ironic overtones to be conveyed.

By contrast, the form of syntactic coordination used by the translators fails to provide the clues necessary for such an echoic interpretation: the self-contradictory assertion "It was the best and worst of times" cannot very readily be interpreted as a reflection of the conflicting opinions "It was the best *of* times" and "It was the worst of times" held by two different individuals or groups of individuals. As a result, the translation actually loses the ironic flavour of the original. Thus here we have an example of how the change of certain syntactic characteristics in the translation can lead to the loss of subtle, but nevertheless important clues to the intended interpretation.

In the example just looked at, these communicative clues could probably be preserved quite simply in most cases by preserving the relevant syntactic properties themselves, that is, by using a series of non-conjoined sentences. However, due to the linguistic differences between languages, matters are not always as straightforward. Savory's example used at the beginning of this chapter (section 1, p. 195) is a case in point. It is of particular interest because scholars have different judgments about what effects are involved here. For convenience, I reproduce the example here.

kai heteron epesen epi teen geen teen agatheen
[and other it-fell on the ground the good]
(Luke 8:8)

This sentence is interesting because of the syntactic peculiarity that the adjective *agatheen* 'good' is placed following the head of the noun phrase rather than preceding it. This structure is grammatical in Greek, but not in English, and hence cannot be imitated as such without violating English grammar. More importantly, however,

Savory felt that in Greek this construction places a special emphasis on the adjective *agatheen* here - an effect that a literal imitation of the Greek structure in English certainly would not have:

> "St. Luke had not written *epi teen agatheen geen*, he had written words which had a slightly different emphasis on the adjective - 'on ground which was good', or something like this." (Savory 1957, p. 63f)

This view that the postposition of the adjective is likely to convey emphasis is shared by a number of other scholars (e.g. Reiling and Swellengrebel 1971; Winer 1882).

However, before pursuing this special effect further, we should briefly take note of other scholars who differ from this intuition. Blass and Debrunner (1961), for example, claim that in constructions where the adjective is postposed the emphasis is "... more on the substantive (*eis teen geen teen agatheen* Lk. 8:8, in contrast to *petran* etc.)" (p.141).

Plummer (1922) does not refer to emphatic effects at all, but only notes that "The double article in all three accounts presents the soil and its goodness as two separate ideas: 'the ground (that was intended for it), the good (ground).'" (p. 219) Similarly Turner (1976) seems to see no special significance in the postposition of the adjective in Biblical Greek:

> "The position of participial and adjectival phrases, qualifying an articular noun, is regularly between article and noun in non-Biblical Greek, unless there is a special reason. However, in Jewish Greek the tendency is to place the adjectival phrase after the noun, as in Semitic languages, with the article repeated." (p. 110)

Let us start with Turner's point, trying to see why the position of the adjective would be important for the interpretation of this (and other) utterances. It seems intuitively clear that if the postposition of the adjective is nothing special in biblical Greek, then we should not give its occurrence any special attention. Relevance theory can explain this intuition.

As we saw in chapter 2, section 3, the principle of relevance establishes a cost-benefit correlation between the effort needed to process a stimulus and the contextual effects to be expected as reward. A communicator can exploit this correlation for special contextual effects, as Sperber and Wilson (1986a) have shown for utterances that involve repetition:

> "... the task of the hearer faced with these utterances is to reconcile the fact that a certain expression has been repeated with the assumption that optimal relevance has been aimed at. Clearly, the extra linguistic processing effort incurred by the repetition must be outweighed by some increase in contextual effects triggered by the repetition itself." (p. 220)

Put in general terms: if a communicator uses a stimulus that requires *more* processing effort than some other stimulus equally available to him, the hearer can expect that the benefits he can expect from processing the more costly stimulus will *outweigh* the increase in processing cost - otherwise the communicator would have failed to achieve optimal relevance.

One of the factors that affect processing cost is the structural complexity of the stimulus. Another is frequency of use: the more commonly a certain type of structure occurs in stimuli, the less processing effort it seems to require.

It is in relation to this latter point that Turner's observation becomes important. If in the Greek of Luke and his audience the postposed adjective was quite a frequent or even the normal construction, then its use would *not* constitute a perceptible increase in processing cost, and hence would not give rise to expectations of increased contextual effects. Turner does give some statistics, but unfortunately for Luke they cover only the first two chapters (which are believed by many scholars to show particularly strong Semitic influence in the Greek), and so it is difficult to establish whether his point is valid for the passage in question or not.

Since our main interest is not in the particular interpretation of this text, but in an explicit account of how syntactic structure can be used to provide communicative clues to the interpretation of utterances, let us assume that the scholars who do perceive here a clue to some special effect are right. In this case, can relevance theory help us to understand why there should be such seemingly divergent intuitions about what this effect is? I believe that relevance theory enables us, in fact, to see that these intuitions are not necessarily contradictory, but more likely express different aspects of a somewhat complex set of perceptual effects.

Let us take our clue from Blass and Debrunner's remark (1961) that there is more of an emphasis on the noun, that is, *geen* 'soil', "in contrast to *petran* etc.". As will be recalled, the "Parable of the Sower", of which this utterance is a part, describes how in the process of sowing parts of the seed fall into different locations:

(7) (a) ho men epesen para teen hodon ...
'some fell by the wayside'
(b) kai heteron katepesen epi teen petran ...
'and some fell upon a rock ...'
(c) kai heteron epesen en mesoo toon akanthoon
'and some fell among thorns ...'
(d) kai heteron epesen eis teen geen teen agatheen
'and other fell on good ground'

As is obvious, these expressions are remarkably parallel in their syntactic, semantic and phonological structure. Sperber and Wilson (1986a) have pointed out that such parallelisms "... reinforce the hearer's natural tendency to reduce processing effort by looking for matching parallelisms in propositional form and implicatures" (p. 222). So having processed the first three expressions (a)-(c), the hearer may have strong expectations that (d) will have the same structure, and particularly he may be likely to expect the most relevant part of the fourth expression to be found again at the same point as in the preceding expressions, that is, in the head of the prepositional phrase, which in each case very concisely indicates a new location: *hodon* "wayside", *petran* "rock", and *akanthoon* "thorns".

With this strong expectation of parallelism, an adjective placed between the article and the head noun may easily be given less attention than it would otherwise have; it might possibly be overlooked. But if the communicator wants to draw attention not only to the fact that the fourth part of the seed fell on soil, but also that it was *good* soil, then he would need to make the adjective more noticeable - and using the adjective in postposition would seem a very suitable clue for achieving that effect. It gives the adjective more prominence by placing

it in a phrase of its own, without, however, breaking the parallelism in the overall structure of the sentence.

If this analysis is right, then this sentence is indeed an example of a very effective use of language. By maintaining parallel structures in all four sentences, the communicator keeps the focus on the different locations throughout, and by postponing the adjective in the fourth sentence, he gives it the desired degree of prominence at the same time.

Now we can also account for the apparently conflicting intuitions of Savory on the one hand and Blass and Debrunner on the other: Savory reacts to the relative prominence of the adjective - Blass and Debrunner react to the fact that the postposition of the adjectives allows the noun *geen* to retain the expected focal position in the expression, which puts it, as Blass and Debrunner perceive it, "in contrast" to the other three locations mentioned.

5 Communicative clues arising from phonetic properties

Let us now turn to phonetic properties, and their written or graphological counterparts. They typically serve to convey how a word is pronounced or spelled, and this can be an important clue in translation when it comes to the rendering of proper names. Thus it can be relevant to know what an individual is called: it makes reference to that individual easier and at times it may provide additional clues about him or her, for example as regards nationality. Levý, for example, recognizes transcription as one of three "working procedures of translation" the translator can utilize (1969, p. 88, translation my own) under certain conditions with names and also with certain kinds of onomatopoeic expressions.

At the same time, the relationship between translation and transcription remains somewhat unclear. On the one hand, transcription is seen as a legitimate "working procedure of translation", but on the other, it is treated as clearly distinct from translation, as can be seen from the following passage from Levý on the treatment of onomatopoeic expressions:

> "Translation is possible when the onomatopoeic sound sequence obtains conceptual values or word character, as is the case with the 'language' of domestic animals and the most common sounds of nature. However, it is not possible to translate or substitute sound-imitating sequences that constitute a unique imitation of a sound of nature created ad hoc. Here phonetic transcription alone is possible." (1969, pp. 90f; translation my own)

Sometimes Levý uses the expression "translation in the true sense of the word" (1969, p. 91; translation my own) to contrast it with transcription. This conceptual problem is not peculiar to Levý - consider, for example, the following statement by Newmark:

> "In theory, names of single persons or objects are 'outside' languages, belong, if at all, to the encyclopaedia not the dictionary, have, ..., no meaning or connotations, are, therefore, both untranslatable and not to be translated." (Newmark 1988, p. 70)

Rather the problem is general in the sense that virtually all translation work requires transcription at one point or another, and yet transcription seems to be different from translation.

In the approach suggested here, transcription causes no special conceptual problems because it involves genuine properties of the original that can contribute to relevance.

At the same time, transcription of names remains clearly distinct from 'translation proper' because each measure arises from a set of properties clearly distinct from the other - that is, phonological (or graphological) versus semantic ones.[11]

6 Communicative clues arising from semantic constraints on relevance

We have already looked at the requirement that resemblance in communicative clues should involve resemblance in semantic representation between the translation and the original. However, there is other information that is linguistically encoded and yet not included in the semantic representation - not because this information is contextual, but rather because it is not truth-conditional at all. One group of words that fall under this category are "pragmatic connectives" (cf. e.g. Blakemore 1987, Blass 1988 and forthcoming, Gutt 1988a), perhaps better-known by some as 'discourse markers'.

So let us look at "pragmatic connectives", and see how resemblance in the clues they provide can be important

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11 Our approach can also account straightforwardly for the fact that there are cases where proper names are not transcribed but rendered on the basis of such semantic meaning as they might have: this is to be expected where that semantic meaning may be felt more relevant than the phonological form of the name - as is the case e.g. with names that give evidence of the person's character, so that in a German translation of Sheridan's *School for Scandal Careless* may become *Ohnsorg* (Stuttgarter Übersetzung, cited in Levý (1969, p. 87f). However, this brings in the potential need for selecting which of a range of possible clues a translator should intend to preserve - a problem to which we will return in chapter 7.

for translation, in this instance for an English translation of a German original.

The German original is a moral anecdote by Peter Hebel; the part that interests us is the following:

1 "Man findet gar oft, wenn man ein wenig aufmerksam ist, dass Menschen im Alter von ihren Kindern wieder ebenso behandelt werden, wie sie einst ihre alten und kraftlosen Eltern behandelt haben.
2 Es geht auch begreiflich zu.
3 Die Kindern lernen's von den Eltern; sie sehen und hören's nicht anders und folgen dem Beispiel.
4 *So* wird es auf die natürlichsten und sichersten Wege wahr, was gesagt wird und geschrieben ist, dass der Eltern Segen und Fluch auf den Kindern ruhe und sie nicht verfehle." (Hebel 1972, p. 6)

As will be noted, the sentence 4 is introduced by the particle *so*; if we were to paraphrase this sentence without the use of this particle, we might arrive at a rendering like the following:

(8) *In this way* [i.e. by observing and following the example of their parents] what is said and written comes true ..., that the blessing and curse of the parents descend on their children and do not pass them by."

Now let us look at one English translation of this text.

(9) 1 "We find very often, if we are just a bit observant, that people are treated by their children in old age just as they once treated their old and helpless parents.
2 And this procedure is understandable.
3 The children learn it from their parents; they see and hear nothing else, and follow the example set them.
4 *So*, what is said and written comes true in the most natural and surest way; that the blessing and curse of the parents descend on their children and do not pass them by." (Steinhauer 1972, p. 7)

If we tried again to paraphrase sentence 4, avoiding the use of *so*, we would probably arrive at something like (10):

(10) "*As a consequence* [of the fact that children learn from their parents and follow their example], what is said and written comes true ... that the blessing and curse of the parents descend on their children and do not pass them by."

When we compare the two paraphrases (8) and (10), we feel that the translation differs from the original: "in this way" and "as a consequence of" clearly differ in their meanings. Thus in the case of the German original, the particle *so* seems to contribute to the truth-conditions of the utterance in which it occurs, *asserting* essentially that "children inherit the blessing and curse of their parents by following their example". In the English translation, however, the actual assertion is limited to "children inherit the blessing and curse of their parents", and this assertion is represented as *following from* another assumption: that children follow their parents' example.

While the meaning of the German *so* here is essentially anaphoric, in an adverbial function, it may seem less clear how the English *so* can give rise to the "consequential" interpretation of the utterance.[12]

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12 English *so* can also be used in an anaphoric sense. In the English translation considered here, however, *so* does not lend itself naturally to an anaphoric interpretation. Note that, in contrast to German *so*, the most common use of *so* in English seems to be "consequential" (often corresponding to German *also*); its anaphoric use seems to be comparatively rare.

Using the framework of relevance theory, Blakemore (1987) has shown that English *so* has as meaning "... an instruction to interpret the proposition it introduces as a logical consequence." (p. 87; cf. also Blakemore 1988a) Thus when processing *so* in our English translation, the addressee uses the contextual information available to him to construct an argument to which section 4 is the conclusion, as schematized in (11) below.

(11) Premise 1
.....
Premise n

Conclusion: What is said and written comes true in the most natural and surest way; that the blessing and curse of the parents descend on their children and do not pass them by.

Under the principle of relevance the addressee will expect the premises to be highly accessible contextual assumptions. What assumptions could these be? Since part 3 of this section of text has just been processed by the addressee, it is very highly accessible at this point, and would naturally be considered as a possible premise. (12) represents the state of interpretation so far:

(12) Premise 1: The children learn it from their parents; they see and hear nothing else, and follow the example set them.
...
Premise n

Conclusion: What is said and written comes true in the most natural and surest way; that the blessing and curse of the parents descend on their children and do not pass them by.

Now the conclusion certainly does not follow from premise 1 alone - other premises must be involved to make this a valid inference. In this case, the premise (or set of premises) required would be something like the following:

(13) Premise 2: If the children follow the example of their parents, then their blessing and curse descend on them.

Thus the use of *so* in section 4 of the example leads the audience to construct an argument along the following lines:

(14) Premise 1: The children learn it from their parents; they see and hear nothing else, and follow the example set them.

Premise 2: If the children follow the example of their parents, then their blessing and curse descend on them.

Conclusion: What is said and written comes true in the most natural and surest way; that the blessing and curse of the parents descend on their children and do not pass them by.

It is interesting to note that despite her detailed quality assessment of the English translation, House (1981) does not point out this mismatch, though it would presumably count as a lexical mistake, and hence come under her category of "overtly erroneous errors". This may be symptomatic of a serious deficiency of approaches to language and translation that do not recognize the crucial role of inference in communication. It is difficult to see how they can adequately account for linguistic

items whose primary function is to specify inferential relationships.

As just shown, relevance theory allows an explicit account of the seemingly elusive "meaning" of such connectives, and so makes a valuable contribution to explicit comparisons of translated texts and their originals; in this case it shows that the original and the translation differ significantly in the clues they provide. While the original *so* has a vague, but truth-conditional meaning that needs to be developed in order to obtain the propositional form of the utterance, the translation - mistakenly - uses a pragmatic connective that provides a clue as to how the propositional form is to achieve relevance.

7 Communicative clues arising from formulaic expressions

Other verbal expressions that do not enter the semantic representation are formulaic expressions like greetings, standard openings and closings of formal letters and the like. It is easy to see that, for example, the greeting *hello* does not have a propositional form that could be evaluated in truth-conditional terms - it does not make sense to talk of a state of affairs of which *hello* could be said to be true or false. Nor does it provide any processing instruction, as pragmatic connectives seem to do. On the other hand, it seems clear that the presence of *hello* in an utterance does make a difference to its interpretation, that it "means something". But what does it "mean" and how is this meaning made accessible?

The following account, suggested to me by Deirdre Wilson (personal communication) might be plausible. It is apparent that somehow an expression like *hello* must be stored

in our memory - we can recognize it when it is used. "Ordinary" words like *cow* or *computer* are stored in memory in association with the concepts of the real world objects they stand for; for example, the English word *cow* is part of the linguistic entry associated with the concept 'cow', this concept constituting an address in memory (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1986a, chapter 2). Now as we just said, words like *hello* blatantly do not have such real world objects or extensions which they could be said to represent - so they cannot be associated and stored with the concepts of such extensions. However, it seems true to intuition that we do have a concept of *the word hello itself*, and this allows for the storage of the English expression *hello*. It is associated with the concept of the word *hello* - and that concept is its address in memory.

What kind of information does such a concept convey? As mentioned above (cf. section 3 above), concepts can be assumed to have three distinct entries: a linguistic entry, a logical entry and an encyclopaedic entry. Since *hello* has a phonological form that we can recognize, it must obviously have a linguistic entry providing information, for example, about its pronunciation. It does not appear to have a logical entry since it does not have truth-conditional properties. Its "meaning" is rather contained in its encyclopaedic entry - it consists in what we know about the word *hello*: that it is a greeting, that it is used on informal occasions, and any other pieces of information one may have about the use and appropriateness of this word.[13]

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13 Note again that this encyclopaedic entry differs from the encyclopaedic entry of "ordinary" concepts in that it contains information not about the *extension* or *referent* of the word, but about *the word itself*.

It is in virtue of this encyclopaedic information that formulaic expressions contribute to the interpretation of utterances - that is, this information constitutes the communicative clue provided by stimuli of this kind. So this information can serve as a basis for translating such expressions under our notion of restricted interpretive resemblance. When translating into another language, one can look for an expression that has similar information associated with it, an expression that is, for example, also recognized as an informal greeting.

It is interesting to note that there are formulaic expressions that *could* be assigned a semantic representation, but in ordinary circumstances they seem to function primarily in terms of their encyclopaedic properties rather than semantic properties. A case in point would be the stereotyped expression *Yours sincerely* used at the end of formal letters. Clearly this expression can be assigned a semantic representation, involving the concepts 'you' and 'sincere' - but it seems equally clear that these concepts do not normally enter into our interpretation of such utterances at all. We would not normally interpret this expression as some kind of a claim relating to the sincerity of the writer, but rather recognize it simply as a set expression commonly used to close a letter - information typically stored in encyclopaedic entries of words or other linguistic expressions.

It is this fact that gives translators the option of translating, for example, the Amharic greeting *t'ena*

yɪst'ɪllɪñ, literally 'May he give (you) health on my behalf!' by an English expression like *hello*.[14] Though this expression does have a semantic representation, involving concepts like giving and health, no thought of these seems to cross people's minds when they exchange this greeting. Rather, it seems that speakers of Amharic have a concept of this expression as a whole, and the encyclopaedic entry would in this case presumably contain little more information than that this is a general greeting. There seem to be no special restrictions on its use - it can be used on virtually any occasion, at any time of day or night. Given that this is the information made accessible by the original stimulus, the translator would then look for a stimulus in the receptor language that provides this same kind of encyclopaedic information, and in English, *hello* might be considered a possible rendering on grounds of its generality, though it may be judged less formal than the Amharic greeting.

One might wonder why expressions that have semantic properties should not be used in virtue of those properties. However, once we take into account that utterance interpretation is sensitive to processing effort, this phenomenon does not seem unexpected. If we take the example of Amharic *t'ena yɪst'ɪllɪñ*, rather than derive the assumption schema provided in virtue of its syntactic and semantic properties and then enrich it into a propositional form every time the expression is used, it seems much more economical to recognize it as a standard greeting and infer that the person uttering the expres-

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14 In this romanized transcription *t'* stands for the alveolar ejective, *ɪ* for the unrounded high central vowel, and doubly written letters represent phonemically long segments.

sion was greeting the addressee. Historically, such expressions would probably start out as ordinary utterances, but their stereotyped recurrence could be expected to lead to the development of cost saving processing strategies.

It may be worthwhile at this point to digress briefly because this possibility of storing (part of) the interpretation of an utterance in memory and retrieving it from there has some interesting ramifications. In particular, it can shed new light on the often deplored phenomenon that expressions which are felt to be very meaningful and rewarding when they are first coined tend to lose their impact the more often they are used. Steiner (1975), for example, expresses this experience as follows:

> "Words seem to go dead under the weight of sanctified usage; the frequence and sclerotic force of clichés, of unexamined similes, of worn tropes increases. Instead of acting as a living membrane, grammar and vocabulary become a barrier to new feeling." (p. 21)

What is described here in somewhat poetic terms can be accounted for, at least in part, in the relevance-theoretic framework. Steiner refers primarily to non-literal uses of language, that is, tropes. As we saw earlier on (cf. chapter 4, section 2.2), tropes are rewarding in that they tend to convey a wide range of comparatively weak implicatures, thus creating an impression. On the first hearing or reading, many of the implicatures are derived as contextual implications, and hence they themselves contribute to relevance as contextual effects.

However, the more often a certain trope is used, the more of its interpretation is likely to be remembered. So on later occasions the audience will be able to retrieve

more and more of the interpretation directly from memory. But from the point of view of relevance, there is an important difference between the retrieval of information from memory and its recovery by inference. Assumptions retrieved from memory do not in themselves constitute contextual effects, because contextual effects are defined as resulting neither from the utterance alone nor from the context alone but only from the inferential combination of both (cf. chapter 2, section 3). Therefore, while on later occasions the audience may still derive the same set of assumptions, the more of these assumptions are recalled from memory, the fewer the contextual effects will be compared to the original occasion of utterance. The fewer the contextual effects, the less relevant the utterance is judged to be, and so the feeling of staleness and dissatisfaction with well-worn tropes, which may eventually become 'dead metaphors', follows naturally from considerations of relevance.[15]

To return to our original topic of discussion, standard notices, like *No smoking* or *Wet paint*, seem to be treated in a way similar to that of formulaic expression used as greetings. Again, it is unlikely that the reader of these notices takes the trouble of developing these elliptical expressions into full propositional forms - all he needs to do is recognize the communicative clues they provide: a prohibition of smoking and a warning against getting

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15 Familiarity with such tropes will also make their processing "cheaper", and at a certain stage this may balance the loss in contextual effects. However, low processing effort in itself does not make for consistency with the principle of relevance - the audience will be looking for contextual effects adequate to the occasion, and in literary writings the level of adequacy is likely to be high.

clothes soiled by wet paint respectively. If this is correct, then the often-recommended strategy of translating such standard expressions by corresponding standard expressions in the receptor language - even if their semantic contents are different - can be accommodated within this range of direct translation. Thus the German *Frisch gestrichen* could be considered a direct translation of the English *Wet paint* on the grounds that the two expressions provide the same communicative clue: they resemble each other in the characterization that they are the standard expressions used to warn people of wet paint.

An interesting suggestion by D. Wilson (personal communication) is that proverbial sayings could be accounted for along the same lines. Such sayings have, of course, a number of interesting properties. One is that although the semantics-based meaning of a proverb often presents no problem, it is still difficult to say what that proverb "means". For example, there is no problem in understanding the semantics-based meaning of the German proverb *Man muss mit den Wölfen heulen*, literally, 'One must howl with the wolves.' However, even with this knowledge, a foreigner learning the language would probably still wonder what this expression "really means". At the same time, it does not seem to be the case that proverbs get assigned a different semantic representation, as idiom chunks do - they seem to be much vaguer in their "proverbial meaning", and could be paraphrased in different ways on different occasions. Another significant property of proverbs seems to be that they need to be recognized as proverbs to have their full effect; thus children, and also foreigners, often seem to be puzzled the first time they hear a proverb used, and it seems that they derive their "authority" from the fact that they express popular insights, rather than assertions of individuals.

Under our current approach, it seems plausible to assume that these expressions are treated in our mental lexicon as units - in which case it would be possible for us to have a *concept of that lexical unit, that is, of the proverb itself*, and also an encyclopaedic entry associated with it. On first encounter, we would try to understand it by ordinary processes of utterance interpretation, presumably along the lines of interpretive use, once we know it is a proverb, that is, "something people say". However, as, in the course of time, this set expression recurs, it seems likely that some of these interpretations get stored in memory - and most probably in the encyclopaedic entry associated with the concept of this proverb. Thus we would come to store a number of possible paraphrases and information about occasions of use in memory.

This proposal would account not only for the observations mentioned above, but it would also explain why in translation there is the expectation that proverbs should be translated holistically rather than in terms of their semantic meaning: "One translates as lexical units standing expressions and most of the popular proverbs and sayings." (Levý, 1969, p. 102) Thus *When in Rome, do as the Romans do* could be justified as a direct translation of the German *Man muss mit den Wölfen heulen* along the lines of stimulus reproduction. It would be based on information shared by the encyclopaedic entries of both proverbs.

8 Onomatopoeia and communicative clues

The same framework can help us to deal explicitly with the translation of onomatopoeia. We noted, in section 5 above, that these can be reproduced in a translation by transcription. However, it may be recalled that part of Levý's observation cited there was that "Translation is possible when the onomatopoeic sound sequence acquires *conceptual values and the character of a word*, as is the case with the 'language' of pets and with the most common sounds of nature." (1969, p. 91; translation and emphasis my own)

Now what Levý has in mind here are not words with "normal" semantic meaning whose sound structure may in addition be felt to reflect something of the event or thing for which it stands, as the English word *slither* might exemplify. Rather, as indicated in the quote, he refers to expressions used to imitate noises produced, for example, by animals or otherwise found in nature. Thus he gives the following example:

> "In *Waste Land* Pierre Legris replaces the onomatopoeic allusion 'Jug, jug, jug, jug, jug, jug' to a nightingale by the French equivalent 'Tio, Tio, Tio, Tio, Tio, Tio." (Levý 1969, p. 90; translation my own)

The problem is that it seems clear that neither the English *jug* nor the French *Tio* are "conceptual" in the semantic sense - they do not, for example, contribute to the propositional form of utterances - and yet there seems to be something right about Levý's way of referring to them as having "conceptual value".

Here our current approach offers a solution: it provides for the possibility of having a *concept of the*

onomatopoeic expression itself. In this way it can account for Levý's intuition without upsetting the notion of truth-conditional semantics. It can also explain why Levý should attribute "the character of a word" to such expressions - the reason being precisely that we would have a concept, a mental representation of such an onomatopoeic expression as we have of any other word of the language.

As far as his observation about its translatability is concerned, since the concept representing the onomatopoeic expression can have information about its use stored in its encyclopaedic entry, and since this information can constitute a communicative clue, it can be translated into another language if that language has an expression associated with similar information.

9 Communicative clues and the stylistic value of words

The assumption that there are concepts of words that can have encyclopaedic information associated with them allows us also to deal with properties of verbal expressions that are sometimes called "stylistic", and described in terms of sociolinguistic characteristics like "register", "dialect", "accent" and the like. The literature on translation presents many examples that exhibit violations in this area. Here is one given by Chukovskii:

> "In Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Brutus' wife reproaches her husband:
>
> You've ungently, Brutus,
> Stole from my bed: and yesternight, at supper,
> You suddenly rose, and walk'd about. (II,i)
>
> In his translation of the tragedy, A.A. Fet used the word *nevezhlivo*, 'impolitely,' for "ungently," the colloquial word *vechor* instead of *vecher* for "yesternight," and the ultra-formal word *trapeza*

> for "supper." Critics of the time noted the disparity of style: 'What a strange conjunction in three short lines of three words with such totally different nuances - polite, colloquial, and formal!'" (Chukovskii 1984, p. 98)

In fact, the translation of *furuike* in Yuasa's example (cf. section 3, p.206 above) also involves a stylistic problem of this very kind. We noted there how relevance theory helped us to see that some of the information that Yuasa felt was missing from certain translations - that is, information about the presence of the poet by the side of a pond in a Japanese garden - was contextual rather than semantic. Yuasa notes another deficiency with the translation 'old pond':

> "Second, I noticed that *furuike* was not the same thing as *furuki ike*. The latter is perfectly conversational, even prosaic, but the former is unlikely to be used in ordinary conversation: being a compound, it has a bookish Chinese flavour, is even somewhat archaic." (Yuasa 1987, p. 234)

In this passage Yuasa is obviously not saying that the pond had 'a bookish Chinese flavour', but that this is a property of the word *furuike*. In terms of the account given above, this can again be explained by saying that there is a concept of the word *furuike*, and that part of its encyclopaedic entry has this information about its Chinese association and archaic nature.

Once one realizes that this information relates to a particular word of the Japanese language, one is not surprised that Yuasa could not find an English word that would convey this same information - there would most likely not be an English word that would be felt to have a 'bookish Chinese flavour'. However, there are words in English that are perceived as 'archaic', and this is the aspect of style Yuasa tried to approximate in his translation: "... to convey the archaic flavour of the origi-

nal word, I decided to use the word 'ancient'." (Yuasa 1987, p. 234)

Thus we find that the assumption that our minds store concepts of words in addition to concepts of the objects and events which those words describe is rather consequential. It allows us to give an explicit, empirical account not only of the "meaning" of such "meaningless" expressions as *hello*, but of a whole range of stylistic phenomena. Note also that this model provides a principled account of how there can be such differences between synonyms - that is, between words that, by definition, are supposed to mean the same. The identity in meaning, that is, the fact that two words make the same contribution to the truth-conditions of an utterance, as, for example, *copper* and *policeman* would, can be accounted for by the fact that both words are associated with a concept of the same kind of person. The stylistic difference, on the other hand, would naturally be provided for by the fact that each word is mentally represented by a distinct concept, and that each of these concepts could have its own encyclopaedic entry.

While agreeing with this in essence, some readers may wonder how such non-semantic information enters into the process of utterance interpretation. For an answer it may be helpful to remind ourselves of what Sperber and Wilson (1986a) say about how non-verbal, or more generally, non-coded stimuli function in ostensive communication:

> "The stimulus used by the communicator is itself a source of interpretive hypotheses. The description of a non-coded ostensive stimulus (e.g. *Mary is sniffing ecstatically*, or *Mary is pretending to drive a car*) gives immediate access to the encyclopaedic entries of certain concepts and the assumption schemas they contain." (p. 167)

Thus in the case of non-coded communication, the stimulus affects the individual by being *described*. Taking the example from Sperber and Wilson (1986a, p. 55) where Mary is sniffing ostensively to draw attention to a smell of gas, the addressee would see and hear Mary's behaviour and *via his perceptual systems* would construct a mental representation, that is, a description, of it that could be passed on to the central processors.[16]

Something rather similar seems to take place in the case of coded communication, except that most likely there are several layers of description involved in the perception of linguistic stimuli, including, as already mentioned, phonetic, syntactic and semantic representations. However, it seems that just as our mind produces a description of a certain expression in terms of its syntactic properties, so it can access a description of it in terms of its stylistic properties, and use it to derive contextual effects, that is, use it as a communicative clue.

10 Communicative clues arising from sound-based poetic properties

The realization that verbal stimuli, too, can function in communication via some appropriate description of their perceived properties can help us also to account for the possibility of exploiting the sound of words for communicative effects - and also for the problems they pose for translation:

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16 Note that the term "description" does not refer to any *verbal* description.

> "When Virgil wrote
>
> Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum
> [With galloping sound the hoof strikes the crumbling ground; gloss my own]
>
> he wrote a line which has ever since been famous because its rhythm and its accents suggest the thudding of the hooves of a galloping horse, but no translator can preserve and reproduce this." (Savory 1957, p. 79)[17]

The rhythm and accents of this utterance would be taken in perceptually, giving rise to some mental representation or description as output. The similarity of this utterance in sound with the "thudding of hooves of a galloping horse" would be due to similarities in the mental representations or descriptions of these two kinds of phenomena.

Since the rhythm and accents of the utterance are due to the particular phonetic properties of the Latin words of which it consists and to Latin poetic conventions of stress placement, it would indeed be unlikely that a sequence of words in some other language would resemble the original in both semantic representation and a description bearing similarity to that of the sound of "thudding hooves". So Savory's claim that "... no translator can preserve and reproduce this" seems quite safe.

Of course poetry exploits the phonetic properties of words and utterances not only on the grounds that they may be perceived as resembling the sound of phenomena in our world. Thus Levý observes that rhyme and rhythm im-

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17 The line quoted is from the Aeneid, book 8, line 596; cf. O. Ribbeck (1862), *P. Vergili Maronis, Aeneidos libri VII-XII*, Teubner, Leipzig, p. 104.

pose structural constraints on the construction of the utterance that are independent of syntactic structure, and that hence can conflict with syntax:

> "A weakening of syntactic relations in verse follows simply from the fact that these are not the only organizing factors. The continuity of the sentence in verse is broken by verse boundaries (...), and conversely individual parts that do not cohere syntactically are linked by rhyme and other formal parallelisms. All this contributes to the independence of smaller segments and a weakening of connectives and syntactic functions." (1969, p. 174; translation my own)

While these observations seem true enough in themselves, it may not be obvious why such a weakening of syntactic relations should give rise to poetic effects. According to relevance theory, poetic effects arise essentially when the audience is induced and given freedom to open up and consider a wide range of contextual assumptions, none of which are very strongly implied, but which taken together create an "impression" rather than communicate a "message". (Cf. our discussion of the indeterminacy of meaning in chapter 4, section 2.2.) The reason why rhyme and rhythm can have such a poetic effect is that they can provide this kind of freedom for interpreting the text in question. As Levý points out, in prose the interpretation of the utterance follows the syntactic organisation of the utterance; concepts are grouped together and interpreted in terms of their syntactic relations, and of course one important function of syntactic relations is to *specify* the semantic relations that hold between the various constituents of the sentence. In this way syntactic structure is one of the essential properties of natural language that allow it to work with a degree of precision not normally afforded by non-verbal communication.

However, on the assumption made in relevance theory that poetic effects require the freedom to explore a wide

range of comparatively weak interpretations, it is clear that the "precision" of syntactic structure will often be found to inhibit poetic effects: it reduces rather than extends the range of possible interpretations.

Rhyme and rhythm, however, impose phonological patterns that are independent of syntactic structure and may indeed cross-cut it. These patterns tend to enrich the interpretation, not only because they give rise to additional groupings, but also because, in contrast to syntactic relations, the relations they suggest are not specified in the logical form of the utterance, and so allow greater freedom in interpretation.

The following lines from Shakespeare's *Sonnet V* may serve to illustrate this:

> Then, were not summer's distillation left
> A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
> Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
> Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was;
> But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
> Leese but their show: their substance still lives sweet.

Here, the boundary at the end of the first line induces the reader to consider this verse on its own, though syntactically the end of the sentence is not reached yet, and there is a corresponding effect in the second and third line. Thus the reader is invited to dwell on and look for rewarding effects not only from the sentence as a whole, but also from each part separately, as divided by the verse boundaries.

Conversely, though the fourth line is not linked to the other parts of the poem by any particular syntactic or logical function, it is presented as an integral part of

it by its conformity to the formal structure, and it is left to the audience to explore its relationship to the content of those other parts.

To illustrate further that poetic effect does indeed depend essentially on this freedom to explore, let us briefly digress to the discussion of one of Hebbel's poems by E. Staiger (1956, pp. 37ff). The poem begins as follows:

"Komm, wir wollen Erdbeeren pflücken,
Ist es *doch* nicht weit zum Wald.
Wollen junge Rosen brechen,
Sie verwelken *ja* so bald!
Droben jene Wetterwolke,
Die dich ängstig, fürcht ich nicht;
Nein, sie ist mir sehr willkommen,
Denn die Mittagssonne sticht."

Prose translation:

Come, let us pick strawberries,
After all, it's not far to the woods.
Let's pick young roses,
Since they wither so soon!
That stormy cloud above,
Which makes you afraid, I do not fear;
No, it is very welcome to me,
For the midday sun burns hot.
(Translation my own)

Staiger comments that the poem gives a "frosty impression", and seems "educative" rather than creative, and he suggests that this "... is to be blamed mainly on the seemingly harmless words 'doch', 'ja', 'nein', 'denn'. Once they are dropped, these educative verses become much more like a song:

Wir wollen Erdbeeren pflücken,
Es ist nicht weit zum Wald,
Und junge Rosen brechen,
Rosen verwelken so bald ..."
(Staiger 1956, 37f)

Prose translation:

> We want to pick strawberries,
> It is not far to the woods,
> And pick young roses,
> Roses wither so soon ...
> (Translation my own)

Again, in terms of relevance theory this observation is natural enough: most of the expressions blamed by Staiger fall in the class of "pragmatic connectives", and as we saw earlier on, the main task of pragmatic connectives is to narrow down the number of possible interpretations of an utterance by specifying how the proposition expressed relates to the context.

Returning to the phonological patterns of rhyme and rhythm, our notion of restricted interpretive resemblance would *allow* for them to be taken into account in direct translation: they provide important communicative clues for the interpretation of poetic texts. Whether any given receptor language has the *means* of providing similar clues is a matter of statistical probability.

Note, however, that our current definition of direct translation does not provide for a rendering that tries to achieve the poetic effects of the original by spelling out or "explicating" some of the weak implicatures of the original. As mentioned in section 3 above (cf. p. 212), such implicatures involve the use of contextual information and hence go beyond the clues provided by the communicator.

11 Conclusion

Here we come to the end of our survey of what kinds of phenomena would be covered by the notion of communicative clues. In our search for a restricted notion of interpretive resemblance that would be applicable across language boundaries, we started out with the demand that it should preserve the analytic implication of the original, thus excluding renderings that involve elaborations and summaries. We found out that this demand alone is not a sufficient condition.

We examined what kind of resemblance is involved intralingually in direct speech quotations and found that this could be adequately defined as resemblance in communicative properties which included the semantic representation of the original but also all other properties of the original stimulus that contribute to its relevance.

Since resemblance in the communicative properties themselves can rarely be achieved across language boundaries, we abstracted away from the communicative properties themselves to the communicative clues they provide to the interpretation of an utterance. We then explored the kind of phenomena that this notion would cover in addition to resemblance in the clues provided by the semantic representation itself. We were able to propose explicit treatment for a number of features and characteristics of texts that have often been viewed as rather elusive matters of style.[18]

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18 Perhaps a word of explanation is in order here for those readers who might have expected a category of communicative clues that relate to "discourse features". The reason why no such category has been set up is not that these features are not considered important, but rather the belief that the phenomena commonly referred to under this heading do not form a domain of their own, but arise

While our survey could not be exhaustive, it will have fulfilled its purpose if it serves to show the following two points: firstly, that relevance theory and the notion of communicative clues can be helpful in allowing explicit accounts of some of the more "elusive tonalities of speech" alluded to in the opening section of this chapter (Chukovskii 1984, p. 48; cf. p. 197 above); secondly, that relevance theory allows us to define a notion of restricted interpretive resemblance that could provide an explicit basis for a constrained account of translation, that is, of direct translation.

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from the interplay of various linguistic properties of utterances with considerations of relevance. For proposals along these lines see Blass (1986), (1988, chapters 1 and 2), (forthcoming), and Blakemore (1988b). Some "discourse features", however, are probably cultural, i.e. contextual, hence do not come under communicative clues: e.g. the tendency to present the main point of a text at its beginning (cf. Gutt 1982).

Chapter 7

A unified account of translation

In the last two chapters we outlined two notions of translation that seemed rather different from each other. In chapter 5 we considered translation defined as 'interlingual interpretive use', a notion of translation that is highly context-sensitive - but at the price of allowing considerable latitude in the range of receptor language texts that would qualify as translations. By contrast, the notion of 'direct translation' introduced in chapter 6 appeared to be a rather fixed, context-independent notion.

While this state of affairs may be acceptable from the practical point of view, from a theoretical perspective the situation is unsatisfactory in several respects.

Firstly, while the notion of 'interlingual interpretive use' fits straightforwardly into the framework of relevance theory, matters seem much less clear with 'direct translation': we introduced the notion via direct quotation - but we did not discuss how either direct quotation or direct translation relate, for example, to interpretive use.

Secondly, our discussion of direct translation in chapter 6 remained largely on an intuitive level; we did not propose any relevance-based technical definition of 'communicative clue' nor of the notion of 'direct translation' itself.

Thirdly, given that we have arrived at two alternative ways of viewing translation - how do the two relate to

one another? And could there not be a number of other options? In other words - is it not possible that there are not just two, but perhaps five or scores of other notions of translation that need to be considered?

Fourthly, if there are different approaches to translation, how is the translator to know which one to follow on any given occasion? And what effect does his choice have on the audience who may have expectations of their own?

The first three questions will occupy us in sections one to three of this chapter. Section four will deal with matters relating to question four. Finally, in section five, I shall try to draw out the main results of this quest for a relevance-based account of translation.

1 Direct translation - a special case of interpretive use

In order to clarify how direct translation relates to other relevance-theoretic notions, let us first take a closer look at direct quotation. While Sperber and Wilson do not deal with direct quotation as a topic on its own, they refer to it in a number of their writings, usually in connection with resemblance-based uses of verbal stimuli. In Sperber and Wilson (1986a; chapter 4, section 7; pp. 227f) direct quotations are presented as "... the most obvious examples of utterances used to represent not what they describe but what they resemble" (p. 228). More specifically, a direct quotation resembles its original "... because it is a token of the same sentence ..." (1986a, p. 227). Similarly, in Wilson and Sperber (1988a) direct quotations, together with parody, are said to be based "... on resemblances in syntactic and lexical form"

(p. 136). And, as already quoted in chapter 6, section 2, in the same article Wilson and Sperber state that, "Direct quotations are chosen not for their propositional form but for their superficial linguistic properties" (1988a, p. 137; repeated here for convenience from p. 198 above).

These remarks, and especially the last one, suggest that direct quotations are not defined as instances of interpretive use, that is, they do not necessarily rely on shared logical properties, but rather on shared linguistic properties. In fact, it seems true to say that an utterance is a direct quotation of another if it resembles the original in all its linguistic properties and is used in virtue of this resemblance relationship.[1] Thus the defining characteristic of direct quotation seems to lie in the presumption of complete resemblance with another utterance with regard to its linguistic properties.

Because of the causal interdependence between cognitive environment, stimulus and interpretation, this sharing of all linguistic properties is also of interest for interpretive use. As mentioned in the last chapter (cf. section 2, p. 201), two stimuli with the same properties will lead to the same interpretation if processed in the same cognitive environment. In other words, it follows

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1 This demand for identity in linguistic properties is possibly too strong; for example, it seems reasonable to say that one can directly quote an utterance without necessarily reproducing all its phonological features. Thus one could directly quote another speaker without necessarily having to reproduce peculiarities of accent; in fact, the reproduction of such peculiarities could lead to an undesired interpretation. A closer investigation of the token-type relationship between sentences may throw further light on this matter.

from the nature of ostensive-inferential communication that direct quotations will lead to the originally intended interpretation if processed in the same cognitive environment. It is this fact which lends to direct quotations their characteristic note of authenticity. They give the audience the possibility of reconstructing for itself the meaning intended by the original communicator, provided it uses the contextual assumptions envisaged for the original act of communication.

However, it is important to note that while this is a logical consequence of the nature of direct quotation, it is not a defining characteristic. An utterance can be quoted directly for purposes that may have nothing to do with the intended interpretation of the original; for example, an utterance may be quoted directly in a linguistic article not in virtue of the interpretation it was intended to convey originally, but perhaps in virtue of some remarkable grammatical feature it displays.

When we introduced the notion of direct translation in chapter six, one of the important points made was that direct translation cannot be understood in terms of resemblance in actual linguistic properties, for the simple reason that languages differ in their linguistic properties. In fact, if the linguistic properties of the original were reproduced, the result would not be a translation at all, but an actual quote from the source text in the source language. It was for this reason that we suggested a more abstract basis for direct translation; we argued that what mattered were not the actual linguistic properties of the source language utterance, but rather the "communicative clues" they provided to the intended interpretation.

In the light of our current discussion, this was a significant step in that it made the notion of direct trans-

lation dependent on interpretive use, as the following considerations will show. According to what we proposed in chapter six, for an utterance in the receptor language to qualify as a direct translation of some original utterance in the source language, it needs to share all the "communicative clues" of that original. But how can we know whether two utterances share a communicative clue? We argued that front-shifting in a Silt'i sentence, for example, corresponded to contrastive stress in an English sentence in that both had "the same effect" on the interpretation of the sentence. How does one know whether front-shifting and contrastive stress have the same effect in these two languages? The crucial point here is that the sharing of these properties is necessary to obtain the same interpretation in both cases. Other things being equal, a Silt'i sentence that did not have the front-shifting would yield an interpretation different from that intended by the English original, whereas a Silt'i sentence that did have it would convey the same interpretation, if processed in the originally envisaged context.

On this argument, the way we can know whether two utterances in language A and B share all their communicative clues is by checking whether they give rise to the same interpretation when processed in the same cognitive environment. This in turn means that the notion of direct translation is dependent on interpretive use: it relies, in effect, on a relationship of complete interpretive resemblance between the original and its translation.

On this recognition we can now consider a relevance-theoretic definition of direct translation:

(1) A receptor language utterance is a direct translation of a source language utterance if and only if it purports to interpretively resemble the original completely in the cognitive environment envisaged for the original.

The various stipulations of this definition as well as some of their ramifications will be considered in the remainder of this section, and indeed of this chapter. However, before turning to matters of detail, let us consider the significance of its most basic claim, that is, that direct translation is a case of interpretive use.

First of all, this claim provides answers to the three questions raised at the beginning of this chapter. With regard to the relationship of direct translation to relevance theory, the answer is that direct translation is covered in the relevance-theoretic framework as an instance of interpretive use. Since indirect translation, too, falls under interpretive use, we find that we have, in fact, arrived at a unified account of translation: both direct and indirect translation are instances of interlingual interpretive use. Thus despite appearances to the contrary, direct translation is not of a kind altogether different from indirect translation - relevance theory offers a unified account of both.

At the same time, we now have a better understanding of the similarities and differences between direct quotation and direct translation. The two differ in that the resemblance relationship found in direct quotations relies on the sharing of linguistic properties only, without necessary reference to the intended interpretation of the original; direct quotation can therefore be defined *apart from* interpretive use; direct translation, however, relies on interpretive resemblance and can therefore only be defined *within* interpretive use.

What the two have in common is that both *can* be used to give the audience access to the originally intended interpretation. In this respect we might say that direct translation is the interlingual "simulation" of a direct quotation: if processed in the original cognitive environment, a direct translation purports to allow the recovery of the originally intended interpretation interlingually, just as direct quotations purport to do intralingually. In the case of direct quotation this possibility is incidental - direct quotations can be used for other purposes as well; for direct translation it is the crucial property - the value of this form of interlingual communication generally depends on it.

The answer to the second question is clear, too: we have just proposed a technical definition of direct translation. As it turned out, we were able to do so without reference to 'communicative clue', since this concept does not have any theoretical status of its own but is, in fact, derived from the notion of 'interpretive use'. However, it may well be that the concept 'communicative clue' will prove of some value in the practice of translation: it might help the translator to identify and talk about features in the source and target language utterances that affect their interpretations.

As to our third question, why there should be two rather than three or more different approaches, the answer is that this is natural on the assumption that interpretive resemblance is a graded notion that ranges over different degrees of resemblance and has complete resemblance as its limiting case: indirect translation covers the range as a whole, and direct translation picks out the limiting case. Since interpretive resemblance seems to constitute a continuum, there is no reason why there should be other

principled, that is, context-independent, ways of distinguishing between cases of interpretive use.

Furthermore, the claim that translation generally falls under interpretive use is significant in that it offers an explanation for one of the most basic demands standardly made in the literature on translation - that is, that a thorough understanding of the original text is a necessary precondition for making a good translation. This is naturally entailed if translation is based on interpretive use: in order to produce such translation, the translator obviously needs to know the interpretation of the original, and in the case of direct translation, aiming at complete interpretive resemblance, his knowledge of the original interpretation would have to be very good indeed.[2]

This also implies that translation is dependent on the translator's interpretation of the original, or to put it more correctly, on what the translator believes to be the intended interpretation of the original. In all cases where the interpretation of the original is not obvious this opens the possibility of error: if the translator misinterprets the original, then his translation is likely to misrepresent it, too. This is another facet of the

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2 This has some interesting implications for attempts to simulate translation in artificial intelligence, because it implies that truly adequate simulations will have to deal not just with sentences and their linguistic representations but with their interpretations in context. If relevance theory is right, this will further necessitate ways of simulating relevance in artificial intelligence, which may posit challenges not considered so far; for example, it would need to take into account the comparative degree of accessibility of information stored in memory and the ability of humans to make judgements about the adequacy of contextual effects.

difference between direct quotation and direct translation: direct quotation is possible without a proper understanding of the intended interpretation of the original. Recitations of memorized religious texts may be a case in point. They are possible even if the meaning of the text is obscure to the speaker - perhaps because it is in a foreign language.

Finally, it is worth noting that, in a way, direct translation sets out to achieve what the communicative approaches tried to do - to convey the intended interpretation of the original to the receptor language audience. The crucial difference is, of course, that direct translation claims to do this not with regard to the cognitive environment of the receptors but with regard to the cognitive environment envisaged by the original communicator.

This observation brings us to the two main points of our definition that set direct translation off from indirect translation, which are the demand for the translation to be interpreted with regard to the original cognitive environment on the one hand, and the presumption of complete interpretive resemblance in that environment on the other.

2 On the use of the original cognitive environment

The stipulation that direct translations should be processed with respect to the cognitive environment of the original may seem surprising and perhaps artificial at first - especially against the background of demands that translations should not require the receptors to know the original culture. However, a closer look will show quickly that this is not an unreasonable demand at all.

For example, it is clear that this principle applies straightforwardly to the interpretation of the intralingual equivalent of direct translation, that is, to direct speech quotations. If one wants to understand what a direct quotation was originally intended to convey one has to try to reconstruct its original setting and interpret it in that light; otherwise one could go seriously wrong, especially in the case of non-literal uses of language or irony. In fact, this point is not only common sense but well recognized in literary studies; one of the preconditions of authentic literary interpretation is a reconstruction of the historical, cultural and sociological background in which the piece of literature in question was written.

Looked at in this light, what seems hard to understand is not the imposition of this condition but rather its widespread neglect in translation. Not only have there been calls that translations should generally be spontaneously intelligible for the receptors, no matter how different their background, but translated works are regularly criticized for failing to convey what are, in fact, context-dependent implicatures. As will be recalled, this seemed to be the case with Yuasa's evaluation of some of the translations of Bashō's haiku when he felt that "... it was the responsibility of a translator to say more than 'an old pond' to give a little more sense of the presence of the poet by the pond" (Yuasa 1987, p. 234). If the same standards were applied to direct quotation, then someone wanting to quote from Shakespeare today should word the "quotation" in such a way that the audience could interpret it correctly, no matter how different their background might be from that of Shakespeare's original audience. The most likely reason for this somewhat absurd situation seems to lie in

the code-model view of language and communication. On that view the successful communication of the original message would mainly depend on the proper use of the code (except for "noise" in the channel), and so, if the translation led to misunderstandings, the cause would naturally be thought to be a coding mistake, that is, an error on the translator's part.

Considered from the point of view of relevance theory itself, the reference to the original cognitive environment is motivated by the need to make the originally intended interpretation communicable, that is, to overcome the basic problem over which the "communicative approaches" stumbled. On the assumption that the audience will use the contextual information envisaged by the original communicator, it is reasonable to expect that they will be able to identify the originally intended interpretation by the criterion of consistency with the principle of relevance.

For the audience this does, of course, imply the need to familiarize themselves with the cognitive environment shared by the original communicator and his audience. Depending on how accessible this information is to them, this may not be an easy task. However, as pointed out above, this task is not unusual or arbitrary but needs to be carried out by anybody interested in communications not intended for himself, even in intralingual situations.[3]

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3 The requirement that the readers of the translation should familiarize themselves with the historical and cultural setting of the original seems to be implicit also in the view of translation which suggests that "... the translator can ... leave the writer [of the original] in peace as much as possible and bring the reader to him" (Schleiermacher 1838, p. 219; translation from Wilss 1982, p. 33; cf. also Goethe 1813.) As Schleiermacher points out, this means that "... the translator tries to

For the translator, one of the important consequences of this is that it makes the explication of implicatures both unnecessary and undesirable. It makes it unnecessary because the reason for such explication was mismatches in contextual information in the cognitive environment of the receptors. Since in direct translation it is the audience's responsibility to make up for such differences, the translator need not be concerned with them. It also makes such explication undesirable because it would be likely to have a distorting influence on the intended interpretation. This can be illustrated simply with one of the examples of figurative language from Larson that we discussed in chapter 4 (section 2.2):

(2) "John eats like a pig". (Larson 1984, p. 248; reproduced here for convenience)

Larson observed that this simile allows for various "points of similarity" to be seen, such as "the pig eats too much" or "the pig eats sloppily" (1984, p. 248). I argued that, contrary to Larson's assumption, it is not necessarily the case that this figure was intended to communicate strongly one of these two possible interpretations, and that, in fact, non-literal language typically relies on conveying a wider range of implicatures more weakly. Against this background it can be seen that the explication of any particular implicature or set of

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let his own work substitute for the reader's lack of comprehension of the original language", but in doing so the translator transports the reader to the "location" of the original "... which, in all reality, *is foreign to him*" (Schleiermacher 1838, p. 219; translation from Wilss, loc.cit.; emphasis my own). Schleiermacher does not, however, stress that this may mean considerable work on the part of the receptor language audience.

implicatures would have a distorting influence. Thus none of the utterances in (3), each explicating some implicature(s), conveys the same interpretation as (2) above:

(3) (a) John eats too much, like a pig.
(b) John eats sloppily like a pig.

Even (4) does not necessarily mean the same as (2):

(4) John eats too much and sloppily, like a pig.

The reason for this is that (2) also allows for other implicatures, like:

(5) (a) John eats noisily like a pig.
(b) John eats greedily like a pig.

As relevance theory points out, the communicator can intend to convey all of these assumptions weakly, without intending to convey any one of them strongly. This simply cannot be captured by explication - it would tend to distort the communicator's intention either with regard to the range or the strength of the implicatures, or both.

This distorting influence is also the deeper reason why the explication considered by Yuasa in his translation of Bashō's haiku (cf. chapter 6, section 3) is undesirable in direct translation. By explicating the word "silence", for example, Yuasa directs the audience's interpretation in a particular direction and thus precludes them from considering the full range of implicatures that the original would have allowed in the original cognitive environment. All this confirms Adams's observation that "... one word with twelve important overtones just isn't

the equivalent of twelve words" (1973, p. 9).[4]

In fact, this brings out afresh the general link-up between the requirement of preserving all and only the "communicative clues" of the original and that of preserving the original interpretation. The very nature of "communicative clues" is to guide the audience to the intended interpretation, hence different clues will lead to different interpretations - if the cognitive environment is the same.

While it sounds plausible that direct translations, like direct quotations, need to be processed with regard to the originally envisaged cognitive environment - should not the knowledge of the original language be considered part of the original cognitive environment as well? If so, there would be little point in such translation: if the receptors are required to learn the original language anyhow, they might just as well read the original itself.

To answer this query, let us briefly turn back to our earlier example from Scott-Moncrieff's translation of *Le rouge et le noir* (cf. chapter 5, section 2 above). One of the possibilities we considered for explaining the trans-

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4 Adams illustrates this point beautifully with a discussion of the title of Stendhal's novel *La chartreuse de Parme* and the possibility of translating it into English (1973, pp. 9f). Having surveyed its rich nuances at some length, he concludes: "Now it's no great problem to write a paragraph explaining, more or less after this fashion, the implications of 'Chartreuse de Parme', but to find three or four English words which will, in combination, produce something like this effect, is the literary translator's overwhelming dilemma - and all the choices open to him are in various ways and for various reasons impossible" (1973, p. 10). Crucially, Adams does not take into account that the problem here is one not only of language, but of difference in cognitive environment.

lator's choice of *thou* for French *tu* was that he might have thought of readers who could have worked out the social implicatures by recognizing *thou* as an attempt to represent *tu* and then accessing information associated with *tu*. We suggested that one reason why the rendering turned out infelicitous was the processing cost involved. It seemed unlikely that the effort involved in this process of interpretation would be compensated by the contextual effects achieved.

This example is important in our present context because it draws our attention to the fact that, as an act of ostensive communication, direct translation remains subject to general constraints on communication: it cannot succeed but by consistency with the principle of relevance, and consistency with the principle of relevance crucially depends on processing effort.

A very clear example of the importance of processing cost in translation is provided by the experience of O'Flaherty (1987), who at one point experimented with a different way of translating Sanskrit literature into English. She reports:

> "One of the first articles I published, in 1968, was 'A New Approach to Sanskrit Translation', in which I called upon the reader to do a great deal of work indeed." (1987, p. 123)[5]

Essentially this was "... a very literal, word-for-word translation, retaining the long, multiple compounds, and bracketing pairs of words to represent the puns and *doubles entendres* with which Sanskrit abounds." (1987, p. 123) She also added "elaborate notes", and she "... took

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5 The author here refers to O'Flaherty (1971).

pains to justify this approach ..." in the introduction (1987, p. 123).

O'Flaherty was fully aware that the result was "... a highly unorthodox form of English *verse*", but she argued that "... the English *language* can certainly strain to accommodate it" (1987, p. 124, italics as in original). The following part of her reasoning is particularly interesting:

> "I had reasoned that the people who were likely to read translations of Sanskrit poetry were not the same people who read the sort of novels that one bought in airports; they were people who were genuinely interested in a foreign culture and who were willing to make a major investment of their intellectual energy in this enterprise." (1987, p. 124)

However, she came to realize that this reasoning was mistaken:

> "I failed to realize two things: that anyone who was interested in fighting through that sort of translation would be likely to go ahead and *learn* the original language; and that people in airports were quite capable of doing that, too." (O'Flaherty 1987, p. 124)

We will not go on to trace the further development of O'Flaherty's notion of translation. The point here is that her experience brings out the importance of the processing-cost element in communication in general, and in translation in particular. Her intention was to get the receptors as close to the original as possible - what she had to learn was that people may not be willing to pay the price for this. What is particularly important for our discussion is that this closeness was often achieved only at the price of "unorthodox" English; one of the examples she gives is the following:

"The moon, grasping with rays like fingers the hair-mass-
darkness, kisses the [night / evening] [- face with - mouth] [closed- bud-made-

lotus-eyes." (O'Flaherty 1987, p. 123)

In effect, this translation violated grammaticality - which means that the audience could not take full advantage of their linguistic competence that provides a very fast and efficient way of developing schemas for propositional forms from linguistic input. As O'Flaherty herself realized, the increase in processing effort approximated that of actually learning another language, and for most readers this was far above the amount of effort they were willing to invest.

This draws our attention to a very significant fact: in terms of processing effort there seems to be a very considerable difference between the acquisition of another language and the acquisition of other knowledge. Learning another language seems to require an amount of processing effort of a different order than the acquisition of general knowledge.[6]

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6 Though O'Flaherty's suggestion that the amount of effort needed *for* this was so large that it approximated that needed for learning Sanskrit grammar was probably made tongue in cheek, it would fit in well with our point here. Assuming that trying to interpret her translation and learning Sanskrit would involve comparable mental effort, the latter would naturally yield much higher returns in terms of contextual effects: once he knew Sanskrit, the reader would be able to appreciate many more features of the original than even the most literal translation in English could ever convey. Thus although these two endeavours were comparable in the effort they required, the pay-off would be much higher for the Sanskrit-learner. - Note also that knowledge *about* language is probably acquired more easily than knowledge *of* language in the generative sense.

However, the difference in processing effort does not only pertain to *learning* the source language, but also to *using* it. Even after an English reader has learned to read and understand Sanskrit, he may still prefer an English translation because it is so much easier to process.

Thus there tends to be a very marked increase in processing effort when one has to change to a language other than one's mother tongue, and this marked difference in processing cost may well be considered the central motivating factor of translation. From this point of view we might characterize translation as an instance of interpretive use between utterances where consistency with the principle of relevance requires that the interpreting utterance is expressed in a code different from that of the original utterance.

If this is correct, then it seems unnecessary to stipulate in our definition of direct translation that the original cognitive environment excludes knowledge of the original language: this will usually follow from the general constraint of consistency with the principle of relevance.

This is desirable not only because it protects our definition from unnecessary stipulations, but also because such an exclusion would probably have been too rigid in that it is quite acceptable at times to include source language expressions in a translation, for example with regard to forms of address. Thus Newmark (1988) points out that forms of address for foreign dignitaries tend to be treated in different ways:

> "The present practice is either to address all and sundry as *Mr* or *Mrs* (...) or to transcribe *M.*,

> *Herr, Signore, Señor,* etc., for all western and central European (...) languages, allowing all other *prominenti* a Mr. ... Aristocratic and professional titles are translated if there is a recognized equivalent (*Comte, Graf, Herzog, Marchese, Marquis, Professeur, Doktor,* etc.; otherwise they are either transcribed (*Dom*) or deleted (*Staatsanwalt, avvocato, ingeniere*), with the professional information added, if considered appropriate." (p. 73)

If source language knowledge were to be excluded as a matter of principle, then the practice of transcription would not be allowed for. However, without this stipulation the case would be determined by considerations of relevance and the guidelines spelled out by Newmark can all be accounted for in terms of consistency with the principle of relevance. For example, relevance theory would predict that if the address form *M.* is so familiar to the English receptors that its use would not incur any increase in processing cost, and if at the same time it would achieve complete interpretive resemblance, then its use would be consistent with the principle of relevance. By contrast, the practice of using translations for aristocratic titles could be explained on the assumptions that a) the original receptor language expressions were less well-known, hence more costly, and b) their receptor language equivalents did not lead to unacceptable losses in interpretive resemblance.

Having discussed a number of significant points relating to the stipulation that direct translations need to be interpreted with regard to the originally envisaged cognitive environment, we still need to consider the other basic stipulation: that is, the presumption of complete interpretive resemblance with the original. As we shall see, this question is dealt with best as part of a more general question about how translation generally can be a successful means of communication. However, before turn-

ing to those wider issues, let us look at a group of translational phenomena that may not seem to fit very well under either indirect or direct translation.

3 Partial resemblance in linguistic properties as translation?

The most representative class of the translational phenomena we want to look at here are glosses or "back-translations". We have used them several times in this study, as in the following Greek example from the beginning of chapter 6 (cf. p. 195):

kai heteron epesen epi teen geen teen agatheen
[and other it-fell on the ground the good]

The question is: how does this fit into our relevance-theoretic framework? It does not seem to fall under either indirect or direct translation in that whatever explicatures or implicatures of the original it *might* convey, they are clearly not conveyed in the least costly way, even if processed with regard to the cognitive environment of the original text. In fact, depending on the degree of difference in the structure of the language, a gloss may be quite unintelligible by itself, and therefore glosses tend to be used mostly in conjunction with a freer rendering.

More importantly, it is not clear that the purpose of the above gloss had much to do with the originally intended interpretation at all. As will be recalled from the discussion there, its point was rather to convey a point of syntactic structure to readers not familiar with the Greek language, especially to make perspicuous to them the linear ordering of the article *teen* and the adjective

agatheen after the noun *geen*. There is no reason to believe that it was part of Luke's informative intention to communicate these syntactic points, that is, these points were not part of the interpretation of the original - though they were used to convey it - and therefore do not fall under interpretive use between utterances. Yet clearly, resemblance did play a crucial role - except that it was resemblance in linguistic properties, in this case resemblance in word order, that counted: by arranging the English words in the same sequence as that found in the Greek text I drew attention to the word order in the original.

Of course, the resemblance does not have to be in word order; often glosses reflect the morphological structure of the original, sometimes also the lexical structure of idiomatic expressions. Zukofsky and Zukofsky's (1969) "phonemic translation" of Catullus, mentioned in chapter 6, section 3, also falls under this category, being based mainly on resemblance in phonological features. The fact that this case is a rare exception rather than the rule follows naturally from the principle of relevance. There would presumably be few readers for whom similarity with the sounds of an unknown language would achieve adequate contextual effects.

However, resemblance in phonological structure does have a place in the translation of poetry. At least some traditions place value on the preservation of rhyme, rhythm and metre in the translation of verse, though this is a controversial point.[7] The reason for the controversy is that unlike Zukofsky and Zukofsky (1969), most transla-

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7 Cf. the discussion in Levý (1969), pp. 30f.

tors of poetry are not satisfied with capturing phonological resemblance alone, but want to convey the poet's thoughts as well; in other words, most translators of poetry attempt to combine interpretive resemblance with resemblance in linguistic properties. However, due to the arbitrariness of linguistic signs, linguistic and interpretive properties are rarely found in the same combination in different languages. Therefore the translator faces a choice, and to the extent that different translators or schools of translation tend to choose differently, controversy arises. The significance of these issues from the relevance-theoretic point of view will occupy us in the next section.

Another application where translators tend to seek resemblance in linguistic as well as interpretive properties is translations intended to help the student trying to learn the original language. Savory characterizes this situation as follows:

> "The student is best helped by the most literal translation that can be made in accurate English; it helps him to grasp the implications of the different constructions of the language that he is studying ..." (Savory 1957, p. 58f).

Put more generally, then, we find that resemblance in linguistic properties can be exploited interlingually. A receptor language utterance can be used in virtue of resembling the original utterance in certain linguistic properties, and there are applications where such partial linguistic resemblance is used in combination with interpretive resemblance.

4 Translation, relevance and successful communication

In this section we want to address the issue of how translation relates to successful communication. Looking into the literature one is struck by widespread scepticism about both how successful translation is and even can be. Thus in Newmark's (1988) view "... the main reason for formulating a translation theory, for proposing methods of translation ... is the appalling badness of so many published translations ... . Literary or non-literary translations without mistakes are rare." (p. 5) And he quotes the article on translation in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (of 1911) as saying that, "Most versions of modern foreign writers are mere hackwork carelessly executed by incompetent hands." Adams's book (1973) is significantly entitled *Proteus, his lies, his truth,*[8] and in the preface he refers to "... whatever falsehood a translator may be forced to put on his title page - Homer's *Iliad*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, the Bible" (p. ix). This skepticism is epitomized in the widely-quoted Italian proverb "traduttore, traditore" - 'translator - traitor'.

We shall first highlight some of the factors that endanger the success of translations, and then consider what help relevance theory can give in dealing with such problems.

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8 The following titles on translation are also suggestive: *The manipulation of literature* by Hermans (1985), and *Übersetzen als Hochstapelei* [Translation as a false pretense] by Willson (1982).

4.1 Risks of failure in translation

The causes of failure in translation are innumerable, ranging from misunderstandings of the original to insufficient mastery of the receptor language. In the literature by far the greatest attention seems to be given to matters of language difference, that is, to problems that arise from lexical and structural differences between languages. Textbooks on translation thrive on examples where translations failed because the differences between the languages had not been observed properly by the translator, and there is little point in either reproducing those examples or adding new ones to the list. Rather, what I would like to do here is bring out some sources of miscommunication related to the distinction between direct and indirect translation.

It follows from the causal interdependence of stimulus, cognitive environment and interpretation that the greater the difference in cognitive environment between the original and receptor language audience, the more direct translation and indirect translation will tend to differ from one another.

A rather clear example of this is provided by a comparison of a translation of Matthew 9:6 into the Ifugao language, reported in Hohulin (1979), with its rendering in the Revised Standard Version (RSV).[9] This example concerns the incident with a paralytic man where Jesus is challenged about his right to forgive sins, and where he responds by healing that man.

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9 For a more detailed discussion of this example see Gutt (1987a).

RSV	Ifugao
'But that you may know	'But I will prove my speech to you. You know that it is God alone who removes sickness. You also know that it is God alone who forgives sin. And so, if I remove the sickness of this person and he walks, that's the proof that
that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sin'	I, the Elder sibling of all people, I also have the ability to forgive sin.'
- he then said to the paralytic - 'Rise, take up your bed and go home.'	Jesus turned toward the paralytic and said, 'Get up, take your stretcher and go to your (pl) house!' (Hohulin 1979, p. 33)

The rendering of the Revised Standard Version can be taken here as an instance of direct translation, relying as it does on the audience to supply the contextual information necessary for understanding this passage.

Hohulin's rendering seems to follow the lines of indirect translation. On the ground that the Ifugao audience is unable to supply all that is implied here and hence has great difficulties in understanding this passage, Hohulin explicates a number of implicatures, mostly implicated assumptions. As can be seen from the parallel presentation above, the resultant translations differ considerably from each other - for example, in the fact that in the Ifugao rendering Jesus seems to be explaining more to the people than in the Revised Standard Version.

It is not difficult to see that miscommunication is likely to arise when these two kinds of translation are mistaken for one another. The cases that seem to have drawn the most attention are those where direct translations have been interpreted as if they were indirect translation. Part of the reason for this is probably that this kind of misinterpretation is particularly common. Unless told otherwise, an audience will naturally assume that a communication addressed to it will yield the intended interpretation by optimal processing. Hence it will go ahead and interpret the text in question with the most highly accessible context available to it. In cases where the cognitive environment of the receptor language audience differs significantly from that of the source language audience, a direct translation interpreted along these lines will quite naturally be misunderstood. The misinterpretations of Mark 2:4 (p. 144) and Ruth 1:22 (p. 145) discussed in chapter 4 above are cases in point.

The converse problem is addressed less often; that is, the case where problems of interpretation arise because an indirect translation is mistaken for a direct one. One voice that has raised this issue in Bible translation is Carson in his criticism of the "dynamic equivalence" approach. Carson observes:

> "If we follow TEV's [=Today English Version] 'police' or NEB's [=New English Bible] 'constable' in Matthew 5:25, are we not unwittingly fostering images of a gun-toting officer or an English bobby? Perhaps these cases don't matter. But many cases have stings in the tail. If for instance we replace 'recline at food' or 'recline at table' with 'sit down to eat', we are going to have a tough job imagining how John managed to get his head on Jesus' breast. Preservation of what is to us an alien custom, reclining at tables, makes it possible to

> understand a later action, John placing his head on Jesus' breast." (Carson 1985, p. 209)[10]

Apart from this problem of giving rise to potential inconsistencies within the translated text, Carson points out that there is the important issue of historical reliability when dealing with cultural differences that are obstacles to ease of comprehension:

> "How such problems are resolved may depend to some extent on the literary stage of development of the receptor group, but even if the group is coming across the printed page for the first time, and enjoys virtually no comprehension of cultures other than their own, it must be remembered that this receptor group will likely use this new translation of the Bible for decades to come, maybe a century or two. During all that time, an increasing number of this receptor people will be exposed to new cultures and education. How well will the Bible translation serve then? Christianity is a religion whose roots are deeply embedded in the particularities of history, and our translations must not obscure that fact." (Carson 1985, pp. 209f)

In other words, what will the audience think of the reliability of a translation that presents people as sitting when they were actually lying down?

While this case may be of little significance in itself, dealing with a point of marginal interest to the average reader, the Ifugao example (p. 273 above) raises more serious questions. Here the readers will almost certainly

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10 This also creates at least an oddity of expression in the Good News Bible in Luke 7:38. Having said that "Jesus sat down to eat", GNB goes on to say that a woman came and "stood behind Jesus, by his feet" - which makes good sense if one knew that Jesus was actually lying down, but seems rather strange with regard to someone sitting at table.

treat the statements "You know that it is God alone who removes sickness. You also know that it is God alone who forgives sin" as sayings of Jesus attested by Matthew, and on a level of authority and authenticity with any other of his attested sayings, like "I am the light of the world". One wonders what their reaction will be once they discover that these statements were placed in Jesus' mouth by the translator.[11]

Barnwell (1983) documents problems of acceptability that seem to have a bearing on this issue:

> "For example, in Nigeria until recently, the versions used in churches have been the KJV [= King James Version] or RSV [= Revised Standard Version], or the rather literal translations in Igbo, Yoruba, or Hausa. Because people have already become used to the form of the Scripture in one of these more literal versions, when an idiomatic (meaning-focused) translation is made into the local language there is often a negative reaction. It seems as if the Bible has been changed. If any part of the meaning is made explicit, people feel that something has been added to the text. They feel strongly that the form of the original should not be changed." (p. 19)

In her analysis of the situation, Barnwell lists six different possible causes of the problem. Interestingly,

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11 Interestingly this point is conceded by Deibler (1988) in his critical response to Gutt (1987a), and he suggests that "it would now be considered better to put this information into the editor's words" (p. 32). This differentiation between the words of Jesus and the words of Matthew is surprising because according to Deibler the real question in explication of implicit information is "... is it part of what the author intended and expected to be understood as part of his message or isn't it? That is the question which needs to be considered" (1988, p. 30). If this were the whole issue, then surely the explication should become part of Jesus' speech since it is he who must have intended to convey those implicatures in the first place.

four of them refer to an inadequate understanding of the "form-meaning" distinction assumed by the "idiomatic approach". In three cases the audience is seen to lack an adequate grasp of this distinction, in one case the translator.[12]

Thus the first cause concerns the people's reverence for the Bible; Barnwell notes this as a positive factor but says that "The problem comes when 'accuracy' is interpreted to mean 'identity of form' rather than 'identity of meaning'." (1983, p. 20)

The second cause is identified as the people's emotional attachment to a particular version.

> "The problem here is that people have become attached to the familiar written form of the words rather than to the message itself. They are not able to distinguish between the *message* and the grammatical and lexical form by which it is expressed." (Barnwell 1983 p. 20; italics as in original)

In a recent article, Nida makes a similar observation:

> "One of the greatest surprises for Bible translators is to find that a perfectly intelligible translation of the Scriptures may not be acceptable. ... In fact, many people prefer a translation of the Scriptures which they only partially understand. For example, the archaic and obscure words and grammatical forms of the King James Version seem to many people to fit the esoteric nature of the contents and to lend authority to the text." (1988, p. 301)

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12 The remaining two causes are the misunderstanding of the Bible as a "magic" book not actually meant to be intelligible and the assumption that "... it is the pastor's job to explain the Bible." (Barnwell 1983, p. 20)

The third cause is "... a lack of understanding of the principles which underlie the apparent changes. People are not consciously aware of linguistic differences between languages. They assume that what can be said in a certain way in one language can be said in the same way in any other language. The distinction between the meaning and the form of language is often confused even by some with high educational background." (Barnwell 1983, p. 20)

The last cause concerns actual mistranslations:

> "Sometimes translations *are* too free and are *not* accurate in communicating the original meaning. In aiming for natural expression of the message in the receptor language, the translator may have lost the essential focus on exact equivalence of meaning. Sometimes changes of form *are* made unnecessarily." (Barnwell 1983, p. 20; italics as in original)

Now having been involved myself for about ten years in Bible translation in the Third World and in the training of Bible translators there, I am aware of the problems of interference between languages that lead to the carry-over of source language structures into the receptor language. And perhaps there are people who reject modern English versions of the Bible simply because they do not sound obscure enough. However, in view of the inadequacies inherent in the "form-meaning" distinction that we looked at earlier on, I would be reluctant to see the problem of acceptability as lying quite so much on the receptor side as both Barnwell and Nida seem to suggest. Could it not be that the receptor language audience reacts to "changes of form" that are, in fact, "changes of meaning"? Is it not to be expected that people have a fairly clear intuition that "implicit information", for example, is different from "explicit information" - given that they are fully capable of putting this difference to good use in everyday communication? Do they not have an

awareness that having *meant* something is not necessarily the same as having *said* it, and vice versa?

In view of this possibility, I would take up Barnwell's third cause (see above), but with a different emphasis: yes, on the receptor language audience's part "... there is a lack of understanding of the principles of translation which underlie the apparent changes." However, rather than holding responsible for this an inadequate understanding of the "form-meaning" distinction, I would, more neutrally, begin with the observation that there is *a mismatch in expectations about the translation*: the receptor language audience expected a translation of one kind, and they received one of another kind. Put more specifically, the audience expected the translation to show resemblances of one kind, and it did not show those resemblances, or perhaps not enough of them.

Conflicts about acceptability are, naturally, unpleasant, but perhaps more serious are those instances where the receptor language audience is monolingual and unable to detect this difference in expectations, because the translation is the only access it has to the original. Such situations can give rise to latent misinterpretations that may come to light only in the course of time, as people obtain other translations of the same work, or learn the source language.

Thus it may come as a surprise to the readers of a number of different translations of the New Testament that Jesus had one major theme in his preaching and teaching ministry, *basileia tou theou*, "the Kingdom of God", this expression occurring more than a hundred times in the four gospels.[13] Thus in the German "dynamic equivalence"

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13 According to Ott (1984), p. 2.

translation, three distinct renderings are used, depending on the context: in "... contexts where the emphasis is on something happening at the present time, the phrase 'God wills to establish his rule now' is used. ... In contexts where the completion of the event is seen as future, ... the words 'When God completes his work, then ...' are used. In passages concerned with seeing the *basileia* or entering into the *basileia* we have translated by 'God's new world'" (Kassühlke 1974, p. 237).

In a draft translation of Luke into Gurung, Glover (1978) uses a still larger number of different renderings, which "fall into four main groupings":

> "1. God's power at work in the world.
> 2. the personal response to God, in obedience and receiving blessing.
> 3. God's future open ruling of the world.
> 4. the ultimate blessings of God's rule in heaven." (p. 231)

The following is an example of grouping 2 (Luke 7:28):

> "RSV [=Revised Standard Version]: Among those born of women none is greater than John: yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.
> Gurung: John is the greatest of all people. Even though he is, whoever, *after seeing my deeds and hearing my words, obeys God according to what I say,* even though that person be small, *he will receive greater blessing than John.*" (Glover 1978, p. 232)

Two renderings in grouping 4 read like this:

> "RSV: Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.
> Gurung: Those who get to eat *God's* feast in *heaven* will be very happy."
> (Glover 1978, p. 235; Luke 14:15)

> "RSV: Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
> Gurung: Blessing has come to you poor people, because since you *look to God, he will give you his full blessing.*"
> (Glover 1978, p. 236; Luke 6:20)

With regard to our discussion here, the following point from Glover's conclusion is particularly interesting:

> "In almost every case the Gurung rendering is considerably longer than the phrase in the RSV, and brings out the meaning far more plainly. But is this not necessary? 'It is quite certain that the Kingdom of God was the central message and proclamation of Jesus' (Barclay, page 63), yet it has remained a puzzle to many people with centuries of Christian heritage and the benefit of years of preaching and teaching. It is more than time for translators to grapple with this central message of Jesus, all the more so when their prospective readers do not have commentaries and other theological works to consult." (Glover 1978, p. 236)

One can understand Glover's concern and sympathize with him, especially with regard to his last point. However, the question that remains is: what does the receptor language audience expect - is it a direct translation that is not easy to understand but preserves, for example, the fact that Jesus had as his central message "the Kingdom of God", or is it an interpretive translation, that is easier to understand, but loses the "Kingdom of God" as a focal concept?

It is only too easy to see how mismatches in expectations can provide fuel for those who hold the view "traduttore, traditore."

This problem of clashes of expectations shows itself with particular clarity in the case of Bible translation, because here the urge to communicate as clearly as possible is equally strong as the need to give the receptor lan-

guage audience access to the authentic meaning of the original, unaffected by the translator's own interpretation effort. Since the differences in cognitive environment between the source language and the receptor language audiences are generally great, these two objectives are bound to clash. If the translator wants to make the translation clear to the receptors in their particular cognitive environment, he will need to bring out explicitly (parts of) his own interpretation or that of some other authority; if the translator aims at authenticity and hence is concerned to keep the influence of his own interpretation on the translated text to a minimum, his translation will in many cases prove difficult to the receptor language audience.[14]

While this problem presents itself in a very crystallized form in Bible translation, it is by no means limited to this area. Examples are found in literary translation, especially in translation criticism. To take again an example involving considerable differences in cognitive environment, let us look at von Tscharner's discussion of translations of Chinese poetry into German. For one song, taken from the *Shi-king* (*Kuo Feng VI*, 8), von Tscharner compares three different German renderings. The rendering that is found most adequate by von Tscharner is that of

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14 The translator can make the interpretation of a direct translation easier by providing part of the contextual information needed through supplementary channels of communication, such as introductions, notes, pictures, glossaries and the like. A strong advocate of this view in Bible translation is Peacock (1981): "The day is gone when the bare text can be put in the hands of the reader if he is expected to understand its message. He needs help in bridging the temporal and cultural gap between the biblical period and today. ... This means Bibles with notes, ..." (p. 8) For further proposals cf. also Gutt (1988b).

Victor von Strauss, who expressed his main objective as follows:

> "Of course my first desire was to translate everywhere faithfully to the meaning, but then also as literally as possible." (von Tscharner 1969, pp. 249f)

That is, Strauss was apparently concerned mainly with a direct translation. Von Tscharner contrasts this with a reworking of this song by Rückert, which he evaluates as follows:

> "Just a few words may suffice to characterize this recreation. It is a perfectly German poem of the subjective-concrete variety, written in Rückert's smooth well-known way. A free poetic development of the given external motif, which also appears to have been altered, ... The added pictorial apostrophes 'mein Licht' ['my light'] and 'o Freudenstern' ['oh star of joy'] addressed to the absent friend, beloved or spouse, having nothing Chinese to them either." (von Tscharner 1969, p. 252; translation my own)

Thus von Tscharner, whose own preference is clearly for direct translation, reacts negatively to a fairly strongly interpretive rendering - precisely because it fails to preserve properties of the original regarded as typical of this kind of Chinese poetry, and hence worth preserving.[15] More specifically, von Tscharner reacts to interpretive translations of these songs because he feels that

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15 Von Tscharner commits himself clearly to stimulus-oriented translation when he says that "So for us only the second of Goethe's maxims of translation can really be valid. The ideal, to express ourselves in the German language as the Chinese in his, is, however, unreachable." (von Tscharner 1963, p. 270; translation my own) The maxim referred to is the one that requires "... that we move over to the stranger and make ourselves familiar with his situation, his way of expression and his peculiarities." (Goethe 1813, p. 705; translation my own)

it is a strong characteristic of the "spirit" of Chinese poetry to leave the interpretation as open and indeterminate as possible, and to prefer "... subjectless indeterminacy, the ambivalence latent in a concise spoken word as well as in an unspoken 'nothing'" (1969, p. 270). Von Tscharner feels that "... we deny this very spirit when in the transfer of Chinese lyric we 'put into the lines' that which we should read 'between the lines', when we spell with an enthusiasm for words and pictures the potential contained in a single, concise word" (1969, p. 270).

Whatever we think of von Tscharner's personal viewpoint, the point here is that considerable misunderstandings can occur when it is not clear what kind of resemblance is intended. Thus a reader taking Rückert's rendering as a direct translation might come to the conclusion that Chinese poetry is not very different in style from German poetry, or, to go back to our first point, a reader expecting a rendering that gives him access to the interpretation of the poem might be disappointed because it seems lacking in coherence and clarity of expression.

Thus we see that the problem of misinterpretation created by misconceptions about the kind of resemblance actually intended is a general one. The question is: what, if anything, can be done about it?

4.2 Making intentions and expectations meet

In relevance theory the need for the audience to recognize the degree of resemblance intended in interpretive use is part of the general requirement for successful communication - which is "... to have the communicator's informative intention recognized by the audience" (Sper-

ber and Wilson 1986a, p. 161). How can the audience recognize the communicator's informative intention? As will be recalled from chapter 2, section 3 the only way it can do this is on the basis of consistency with the principle of relevance. This means that in order to communicate successfully, the communicator must produce a stimulus that will make the intended interpretation the first one to meet the criterion of consistency with the principle of relevance for the audience. All the audience needs to do is go ahead and interpret the stimulus on the assumption that the presumption of optimal relevance communicated by the speaker or writer will be fulfilled.

This means that, in effect, "... communication is an asymmetrical process ..." (Sperber and Wilson 1986a, p. 43). This point is important for our discussion because it entails, among other things, that "... the responsibility for avoiding misunderstandings also lies with the speaker, so that all the hearer has to do is go ahead and use whatever code and contextual information come most easily to hand" (1986a, p. 43). Applied to the translator, who, as we have assumed all along, is also an ostensive communicator - what does this responsibility for avoiding misunderstanding and, more generally, communicative failure, entail?

Crucially, the translator's responsibility begins with the formation of his informative intention. As we argued in chapter 4, section 3, the translator needs to clarify for himself whether his informative intention is, in fact, communicable, that is, whether he can reasonably expect the audience to derive this interpretation in consistency with the principle of relevance. Thus, the translator is confronted not only with the question of how he should communicate, but *what* he can reasonably expect to convey by means of his translation.

The answer to this question will be determined by his view of the cognitive environment of the target audience, and it will affect some of the basic parameters of communication. It will, for example, have a bearing on whether he should, in fact, engage in interpretive use or descriptive use. As we saw in chapter 3, there are instances where the fact that the information given in the receptor language text interpretively resembles an original in another language is quite irrelevant - in which case the "translator" would simply engage in descriptive use. This, in turn, may have consequences for many decisions he will have to make later in the production of the receptor language text.

In other cases the translator may judge it relevant to the audience to recognize that the receptor language text is presented in virtue of its resemblance with an original in another language. In such situations he will have to consider further what degree of resemblance he could aim for, being aware that communicability requires that the receptor language text resemble the original "closely enough in relevant respects" (Wilson and Sperber 1988a, p. 137). To determine what is close enough resemblance in relevant respects, the translator needs to look at both the likely benefits, that is, the contextual effects, and also at the processing effort involved for the audience. Thus he will have to choose between indirect and direct translation, and also decide whether resemblance in linguistic properties should be included as well.

Most importantly for our present concerns, in order for the communication to succeed, these assumptions about the intended degree of resemblance must be part of the mutual cognitive environment shared by him and his audience, and because of the asymmetrical distribution of responsibil-

ities in ostensive communication, the burden will be on the translator: he has to ensure that it is *clear to his audience* what his intentions in this respect are.

In some cases these assumptions may be clear from the audience's request for the translator's assistance. Thus Hönig and Kußmaul (1984) consider cases where the translator is told, for example, to "translate" a business letter but telling only "... under what conditions our offer will be accepted" (p. 27), or where the translation of a paper is to omit the embellishments of the original and to concentrate on reporting what the paper said about a new production process.

In other cases these assumptions may be clear from the "label" with which the receptor text is presented. Thus the fact that the receptor language text is labelled "translation" may make mutually manifest what degree of resemblance is intended. However, such labelling can be relied on only under the condition that the assumptions conveyed by this label are, in fact, mutually manifest to both translator and audience. Given the divergence of beliefs - both among experts and laymen - about what translation should be like, the translator should be most careful before relying on this label for this important part of the communication process.

In many cases, especially when addressing a wide or varied audience, the translator will do well to make his intentions explicit. Thus the practice of translators to explain some of their "translation principles" in a foreword or preface follows naturally from a relevance-theoretic framework.

The importance of the need to ensure that the intended resemblance be mutually manifest to both parties, and the

danger of relying on tacit assumptions in this matter, can hardly be overemphasized. I believe that insufficient awareness in this area has contributed greatly to the misunderstandings, unjustified criticism, confusion and frustration that often tend to accompany translation. Mismatches in these expectations do matter, sometimes only a little, but sometimes very much so. One of the clearest examples that I know of has recently been documented by Dooley (1989) regarding a translation of the New Testament into the Guaraní language of Brazil.[16] A draft translation following the "idiomatic approach" had been completed in 1982, and a number of copies were given out to be tested on a limited scale. After a year's testing, the result was that the church decided that the translation had to be changed. Dooley reports that, "The changes were so extensive that virtually everything had to be translated and keyboarded again" (1989, p. 51).

Dooley explains that "From the Guaraní point of view, the rationale behind the changes in translation style was that the Scriptures in Guaraní should be clearly seen as a faithful translation of the high-prestige Portuguese version. ... What the Guaraní expect is that the meaning in their translation correspond, in a fairly self-evident way, with what they find in the Portuguese." (1989, p. 53). More specifically, the correspondence they look for "... in each passage involves those levels [of grammatical structure] at which comparison with the Portuguese is

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16 This concerns the Mbyá dialect, of which Dooley reports: "Speakers of the Mbyá dialect number around 7,000 and live in eastern Paraguay, northern Argentina, and southern Brazil. The 3,000 Brazilian Guaraní, the principal audience of the New Testament translation in question, live in at least 35 locations in six states." (1989, p. 49)

most likely" (1989, p. 53), and Dooley illustrates that this may sometimes be on the clause level, at other times on the word level and so forth. Interestingly, among other changes, "... much implicit information that had been made explicit in the text was relegated to a footnote, a picture, the glossary or eliminated altogether. Such implicit information, when it was made explicit in the text, came to be viewed as 'explanation' of the text per se" (1989, p. 52).

Looked at from the perspective of relevance theory, it seems that there was a discrepancy between the type of resemblance assumed by the translator's earlier version and the type of resemblance expected by the Guarani audience. Whereas the translator assumed that a kind of indirect translation would be appropriate, that is, a translation that would communicate implicatures with ease to Guaranis with little knowledge of the original background, the Guaranis themselves seemed to have looked for a translation more along the lines of direct translation, possibly incremented by resemblance in linguistic properties as well. This mismatch in expectations led to a breakdown in communication in that "... the use of the Guarani translation was falling behind the use of the Portuguese ..." (1989, p. 54) - that is, there was a tendency to discontinue the use of the Guarani translation.

This example is interesting not only because of the extremity of the situation - the New Testament draft was not just revised, but re-translated - but also because it brings out again the need to consider both processing effort and benefits *together*: the earlier, "idiomatic" version would no doubt have involved much less processing effort for the audience; however, it failed because it was not felt to resemble the "original" - in this case

the Portuguese translation - closely enough in those respects that the receptors judged to be relevant.

It is interesting to note that such differences in expectations matter not only with regard to texts to which particular importance is attached, such as sacred texts. Thus the publisher of the German version of the *Asterix* comic series notes in the introduction to the tenth anniversary edition of *Asterix der Gallier* that his publishing house was surprised by the criticisms made of the translations used in earlier editions:

> "We would never have thought that one would apply to a comic the same standards of translation as to Molière or Proust." (Kabatek 1988, p. 3)

However, they took these criticisms seriously enough to incorporate a number of changes into the tenth anniversary edition.

An alternative strategy is to try to change the audience's expectations. Thus one of the solutions recommended, for example, by Barnwell (1983) is to "... provide opportunities for people to come to understand the principles which are being used in making the translation" (p. 21). Envisaged are such means as discussion, training courses and seminars. This strategy has been used with success in some situations, as reported by Payne (1988), for example. However, the use of this strategy requires rather special circumstances and may not be practicable as a general solution. It is likely that it will more often be the translator who has to change if he wants to be successful in his communication effort.

Now all this may seem very clear in principle: for communicative success, the translator has to ensure that his

intentions and the expectations of the audience will be in line; so he chooses a suitable approach and makes sure that the audience is aware of and in agreement with his choice. But what if it turns out to be impossible to follow the approach selected consistently throughout the translated text? In fact, given the "messy" reality of languages, is it not unrealistic to expect that any particular approach will work consistently for even one text? Will not grammatical differences and lexical mismatches frustrate any such attempt sooner or later, even between closely related languages?

These concerns are particularly strong in the case of direct translation with its objective of achieving complete interpretive resemblance - which brings us back to its second defining characteristic: when, if ever, can translations consistently achieve complete interpretive resemblance with the original? There is no a priori reason why from a purely linguistic point of view it should be possible to compose a receptor language utterance or text that will be able to consistently direct the receptors to the originally intended interpretation without distortion or loss. But if this is so - is not our account of direct translation open to the charge of relying on an ideal and saying little about the realities of interlingual communication?

Here several points need to be made. The first is that the defining characteristic of direct translation is not that it *achieves* complete interpretive resemblance but rather that it *purports to achieve it*, that is, that it creates a *presumption* of complete interpretive resemblance. This difference is not just a fine point of philological interest, but rather basic in relevance theory, paralleling, in fact, the difference between

achieving and presuming optimal relevance.[17] The presumption of complete interpretive resemblance in direct translation gives the receptors important information about the informative intention of the communicator. It entitles them to consider all the explicatures and implicatures which they can recover with respect to the original cognitive environment as having been part of the intended interpretation of the original. Thus this presumption is important for coordinating the audience's expectations with the communicator's intentions.

What is important to note here is that this presumption is of value not only where complete resemblance is, in fact, achieved, but also where the translator knows that it is *not* achieved because linguistic differences between the two languages make this impossible. Being aware that there his translation will not meet the expectations of the audience and hence mislead them, the translator can consider strategies for preventing communicative failure, for example by alerting the audience to the problem and correcting the difference by some appropriate means, such as footnotes, comments on the text or the like.

But, depending on the degree of difference between the languages involved, may the presumption of complete interpretive resemblance not commit the translator to producing a translation abounding with footnotes that bore the audience because they correct insignificant deviations? This might have been the case if direct translation were defined independently of relevance theory. However, in our account it is firmly embedded in ostensive-inferential communication and therefore such

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17 Cf. the discussion of this point in Sperber and Wilson (1986a), pp. 158ff).

corrections, too, fall under the principle of relevance. The translator would have to consider in each case whether the correction can be given in consistency with the search for optimal relevance; in other words, whether the benefits of the correction will outweigh the processing effort it requires.

These same points apply to translation in general. By monitoring the agreement or disagreement between the audience's expectations and what his translation is likely to achieve, the translator can anticipate mismatches; he can then consider further whether these mismatches are relevant enough to require explicit treatment and if so, how they will be best treated. In all cases he will measure the success of his translation by whether it enables the receptors to recognize his informative intention.

Before leaving this topic of successful communication by translation, it may be worthwhile to briefly address a phenomenon found in translation that on the face of it seems to be at odds with our definition of successful communication. This is the fact that translations can be, and often are, read with enjoyment on the audience's part *without* them realizing that they are, in fact, reading a translation rather than an original. In terms of our definition of successful communication, such instances cannot be considered fully successful in that one of the intentions of the translator, that is, that his work is to achieve relevance in virtue of its resemblance with an original, has not been recognized by the audience. On the other hand, from the audience's point of view, they might well be satisfied with the result of this act of communication.

This apparent ambivalence of the notion of "successful communication" can be accounted for readily in the

relevance-theoretic framework. In fact, it follows straightforwardly from its basic claim that the only way in which an audience can identify the intended interpretation of a stimulus is by the criterion of consistency with the principle of relevance, that is, by assuming that the first interpretation that leads to adequate effects without involving the fortuitous expenditure of processing effort is the speaker-intended interpretation - it has no other, more direct means of knowing what the speaker meant. This allows for the possibility that, due to mismatches in their cognitive environment, the audience may arrive at an interpretation which it finds consistent with the principle of relevance, and hence assumes to be the speaker-intended one although it differs, in fact, from the speaker's informative intention. What this means is that the criterion of consistency with the principle of relevance does not necessarily reveal all instances of miscommunication. This seems true to our experience: misunderstandings can go unrecognized for quite some time, not only in translation, but in communication in general - which is just another illustration of the fact that the principle of relevance does not *guarantee* communicative success.

5 Conclusion

Having surveyed the relationship between translation and successful communication, we are now in a position to draw out the main points of this study.

In this study I have tried to show in an exploratory fashion that it is plausible to assume that the range of phenomena commonly considered as translation can be accounted for adequately in terms of general psychological characteristics of human beings, without recourse to

descriptive-typological frameworks. We sampled instances of translation where the relationship to the original is incidental rather than crucial for the success of the translation, and found that these are naturally accounted for in relevance theory in terms of descriptive use. Turning to other instances of translation where resemblance with the original is important, I argued that most of these instances are covered under the notion of interpretive use already developed in the theory. I also developed the idea that interpretive use can account for the concern to preserve both meaning content and style. Realizing that ostensive stimuli also have intrinsic properties quite apart from their use to convey meaning, we briefly considered the role that resemblance in linguistic properties can play in translation. Again, we found that this is a possibility provided and accounted for by the relevance-theoretic framework.

In all instances we were able to account for the phenomena in question without reliance on descriptive-classificatory theory, and indeed without reliance on any translation principles or rules. All the aspects of translation surveyed, including matters of evaluation, were explicable in terms of the interaction of cognitive environment, stimulus and interpretation caused by a psychological endowment believed to be part of our human nature, and captured in the principle of relevance.

To the extent that this exploration allows valid inferences about translation in general, its main consequences seem to be the following.

Firstly, the translator must be seen and must see himself clearly as a communicator addressing the receptor language audience: whatever his view of translation, even if it is that of a "phonemic translation" after the fashion

of Zukofsky and Zukofsky (1969), he always has an informative intention which the translated text is to convey to the receptor language audience. This recognition should help to raise the often bemoaned, low status of translators as copyists, and prevent misunderstandings that arise from the pretense that there is a direct act of communication between the original source and the receptor language audience.[18]

Secondly, another crucial point that every translator should grasp is that whatever he does in his translation matters primarily not because it agrees with or violates some principle or theory of translation, but because of the causal interdependence of cognitive environment, stimulus and interpretation. Assumptions about what translation is or should be can influence the success of a given translation - not in virtue of any special theoretical status, but simply as contextual assumptions used in the interpretation process that will influence the interpretation process.

Thirdly, since that interdependence is to be accounted for by a general theory of ostensive-inferential communication, there is no need to develop a separate theory of translation. The success or failure of translations, like that of other instances of ostensive-inferential communication, depends causally on consistency with the principle of relevance.[19] Indeed, if the relevance-theoretic

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18 The existence of such a direct relationship is also denied by Reiss and Vermeer (1984).
19 Note that this accounts also for the claim made e.g. by Harris and Sherwood (1978) that translation is an "innate skill". Cf. also the suggestion by Massaro (1978) with regard to the mental processing taking place in simultaneous translation: "Our analysis of the language interpretation and communication situation would seem to imply that no unique or novel skills are required, as long as the interpreter knows the two relevant languages

account of communication is right, then it will be impossible to give an adequate account of translation *without* reference to the principle of relevance.

This is interesting in view of the fact that the notion of 'relevance' - or related notions like 'importance', 'significance' or the like - does occur fairly frequently in the literature on translation. It occurs even in definitions of translation. Vernay (1974), for example, defines translation as "... an act which transfers information given in language A into a language B in such a way that the amount of relevant information received in language B will be identical with that in language A" (p. 237; translation my own). However, it is not treated as a theoretically interesting notion, and so its significance as a key concept has been missed.[20]

Fourthly, the choice of a particular approach to translation, such as direct or indirect translation, is not theoretically significant; both kinds of translations are processed by the same principles of communication, the distinction between the two approaches is purely theory-internal. This implies that there is no *theoretical* necessity for a translator to follow either of the two approaches consistently. What he has to remember, though, is that unexpected deviations from a given approach can

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as well as the person on the street knows one." (p. 300)
20 Thus Vernay, like many others, views the task of the science of translation primarily as a descriptive, interdisciplinary exercise: "Only when the translation scientist has a clear understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of his science will he be able to adequately describe the translation process with its manifold implications and to set up theories and working hypotheses for the translator which will make his work transparent." (1974, p. 248)

lead to mismatches in the cognitive environment and are therefore likely to put communicative success at risk.

Fifthly, this relevance-theoretic account may be of interest to the century-old debate of literal versus free translation: the notions of direct and indirect translation seem to correspond well with these two traditional positions. However, as I see it, the main contribution of relevance theory to the debate is not to arbitrate by coming down on one side or the other, but by making explicit the communication-theoretic roots of this controversy and by helping people to understand the natural strengths and limitations of each.

Finally, due to its exploratory nature this study has tried to touch on a fairly wide range of phenomena; I trust that this will stimulate others to research in much greater depth the many facets of one of the most fascinating faculties of our nature - the ability to open our world of thought to one another.

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